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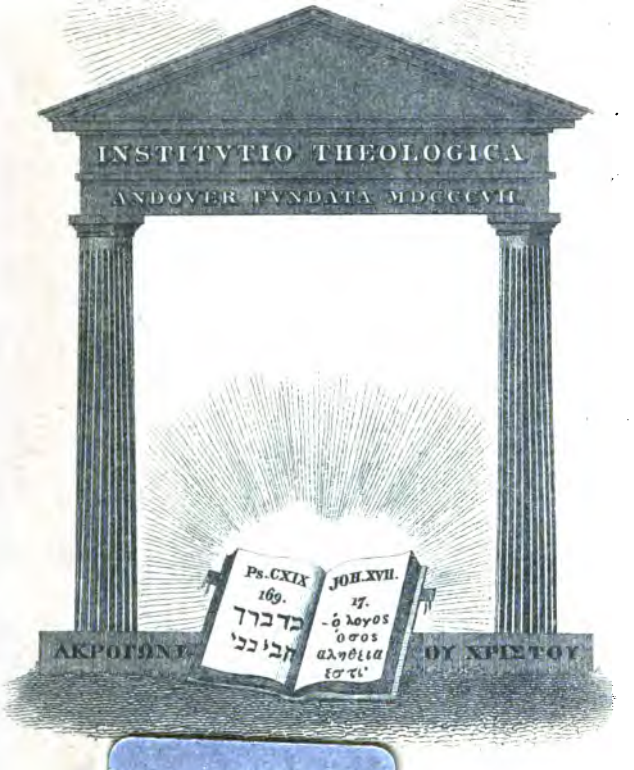

MC NAMEE Binder

THE

LETTERS

OF

PLINY THE CONSUL.

WITH OCCASIONAL REMARKS.

BY WILLIAM MELMOTH, ESQ.

VOL. I.

BOSTON:

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THE PREFACE.

PLINY may be considered in these Letters as writing his own memoirs; every epistle is a kind of *historical sketch*, wherein we have a view of him in some striking attitude, either of active or contemplative life. And if that were his real design in their publication, he could not, it should seem, have taken a more agreeable, or, perhaps, a more modest method of transmitting himself to posterity. To enter, therefore, into a *detail* concerning him, would be only anticipating the author himself, and amusing the reader with a copy, while the original stands before him. Nothing seems requisite to be farther added to the piece, than just to mark the date. PLINY was born in the reign of NERO,

about the eight hundred and fifteenth year of Rome, and the sixty-second of the Christian era. As to the time of his death, antiquity has given us no information; but it is conjectured, he died either a little before, or soon after, the decease of that excellent prince, the admirable TRAJAN; that is, about the year of Christ one hundred and sixteen.

The elegance of this author's *manner* adds force to the most interesting, at the same time that it enlivens the most common subjects. But the polite and spirited turn of these letters is by no means their principal recommendation; they receive a much higher value, as they exhibit one of the most amiable and exemplary characters in all antiquity. PLINY's whole life seems to have been employed in the exercise of every generous and social virtue. To forward modest merit, to encourage ingenious talents, to vindicate oppressed innocence, are some of the glorious purposes to which he devoted his power, his fortune, and his

abilities. But how does he rise in our esteem and admiration, when we see him exerting (with a grace that discovers his humanity as well as his politeness) the noblest acts both of public and private munificence, not so much from the abundance of his wealth, as the wisdom of his economy?

What a celebrated ancient has observed concerning the style of the famous Grecian painter TIMANTHES, is applicable to that of PLINY: "*Intelligitur plus semper quam pingitur;*" his meaning is generally much fuller than his expression. This, as it heightens the difficulty of his interpreter's task, so it necessarily gives great scope to an objector. But in *drawing* after these excellent masters of antiquity, the most successful are only, perhaps, the most excusable; as those who have the truest taste of their works, will least expect to see the strength and spirit of them fully preserved in a copy. This, however, is not mentioned as claiming indulgence to any errors

in the present attempt; on the contrary, they are willingly resigned to just correction. A true critic is a kind of *censor* in the republic of letters; and none who wish well to its interests, would desire to suppress or restrain his office. The translator, at least, has received too much advantage in the course of this performance, from the animadversions of some of the best judges in both languages, not to value that enlightening art, wherever it may be exercised with the same accurate and candid spirit.

THE LETTERS OF PLINY.

BOOK FIRST.

LETTER I.

TO SEPTITIUS.

YOU have frequently pressed me to make a select collection of my Letters, (if, in truth, there be any which deserve a preference) and give them to the public. I have selected them accordingly; not, indeed, in their proper order of time, for I was not compiling a history; but just as they presented themselves to my hands. And now I have only to wish that you may have no reason to repent of your advice, nor I of my compliance: in that case, I may probably inquire after the rest, which at present lie neglected, and preserve those I shall hereafter write. Farewell.

LETTER II.

TO ARIANUS.

I FORESEE your journey hither is likely to be delayed, and, therefore, send you the speech

which I promised in my former; requesting you, as usual, to revise and correct it. I desire this, the more earnestly, as I never, I think, in any of my former speeches, attempted the same style of composition; for I have endeavoured to imitate your old favourite Demosthenes, and Calvus, who is lately become mine. When I say this, I mean only with respect to their *manner*; for, to catch their sublime *spirit*, is given, alone, to the inspired *few*. My subject, indeed, seemed naturally to lead me to this (may I venture to call it?) emulation; as it was, in general, of such a nature as demanded all the thunder of eloquence, even to a degree sufficient to have awakened (if it be possible) that indolence, in which I havelong reposed. I have not, however, neglected the softer graces of my admired Tully, wherever I could, with propriety, step out of my direct road, to enjoy a more flowery path: for, it was warmth, not austerity, at which I aimed. I would not have you imagine, by this, that I am bespeaking your indulgence: on the contrary, to induce you to exercise the utmost severity of your criticism, I will confess, that neither my friends nor myself are averse from the publication of this piece, if *you* should join with us in giving the same partial vote. The truth is, as I must publish something, I wish (and it is the wish, I confess, of indolence) it might be this performance rather than any other, merely because it is already finished. At all events, however, something I must publish, and for many reasons; chiefly, because the tracts which I have

already sent into the world, though they have long since lost all their recommendation from novelty, are still, I am told, in request; if, indeed, the booksellers do not flatter me. And let them; since, by that innocent deceit, I am encouraged to pursue my studies. Farewell.

LETTER III.

TO CANINUS RUFUS.

HOW stands Comum,* that favourite scene of yours and mine? What becomes of the pleasant villa, the vernal portico, the shady plane-tree-walk, the crystal canal, so agreeably winding along its flowery banks, together with the charming lake† below, which serves, at once, the purposes of use and beauty? What have you to tell me of the firm yet soft gestatio,‡ the sunny bath, the public saloon, the private dining-room, and all the elegant apartments for repose, both at noon § and night? Do these possess my friend, and divide his time with pleasing vicissitude? Or

* The city where Pliny was born: it still subsists, and is now called *Como*, situated upon the lake Larius, or *Lago di Como*, in the duchy of Milan.

† The lake Larius, upon the banks of which this villa was situated.

‡ A piece of ground set apart for the purpose of exercising, either on horseback, or in their vehicles; it was generally contiguous to their gardens, and laid out in the form of a circus.

§ It was customary among the Romans to sleep in the middle of the day; and they had apartments for that purpose distinct from their bedchambers.

do the affairs of the world, as usual, call him frequently from this agreeable retreat? If the scene of your enjoyments lies wholly there, you are happy: if not, you are under the common error of mankind. But leave, my friend, (for certainly it is time) the sordid pursuits of life to others, and devote yourself, in this calm and undisturbed recess, entirely to pleasures of the studious kind. Let these employ your idle as well as serious hours; let them be, at once, your business and your amusement; the subjects of your waking and even sleeping thoughts: produce something that shall be really and for ever your own. All your other possessions will pass from one master to another: *this* alone, when once yours, will remain yours for ever. As I well know the temper and genius of him to whom I am addressing myself, I must exhort you to think of your abilities as they deserve; do justice to those excellent talents you possess, and the world, believe me, will certainly do so too. Farewell.

LETTER IV.

TO POMPEIA CELERINA.

YOU might perceive, by my last short letter, I had no occasion for yours, to inform me of the various conveniencies you enjoy at your several villas. The elegant accommodations which are to be found at Narnia,* Ocriculum,† Carso-

* Now called Narni, a city in Ombria, in the duchy of Spoleto. † Otricoli, in the same duchy.

la,‡ Perusia,§ particularly the pretty bath at Narnia, I am extremely well acquainted with. The fact is, I have a property in every thing which belongs to you; and I know of no other difference between your house and my own, than that I am more carefully attended in the former than the latter. You may, perhaps, have occasion to make the same observation in your turn, whenever you shall give me your company here; and I wish for it, not only that you may partake of *mine* with the same ease and freedom that I do of *yours*, but to awaken the industry of my domestics, who are grown somewhat careless in their attendance upon me. A long course of mild treatment is apt to wear out the impressions of awe in servants; whereas, new faces quicken their diligence, and they are generally more inclined to please their master by attentions to his guest, than to himself. Farewell.

LETTER V.

TO VOCONIUS ROMANUS.

DID you ever see a more abject and mean-spirited creature than Regulus has appeared since the death of Domitian; during whose reign his conduct was no less infamous, though more concealed, than under Nero's? He has lately expressed some apprehensions of my resentment: and, indeed, he has reason; for I look upon him with the utmost indignation. He not only promoted the prosecution against Rusticus Arulenus, but

‡ Carsola, in the same duchy. § Perugia, in Tuscany.

exulted in his death; insomuch, that he actually recited and published a libel upon his memory, wherein he styles him, *the stoic's ape:* adding, that "he was *stigmated** by the wound he receiv-"ed in the cause of Vitellius:" such is the strain of his eloquence! He fell so furiously upon the

* The impropriety of this expression, in the original, seems to lie in the word *stigmosum*, which Regulus, probably, either coined through affectation, or used through ignorance. It is a word, at least, which does not occur in any author of authority: The translator has endeavoured, therefore, to preserve the same sort of impropriety, by using an expression of the like unwarranted stamp.

It is observable how careful the Romans were of preserving the purity of their language. It seems even to have been a point which they thought worthy the attention of the state itself; for, we find the Cumeans not daring to make use of the Latin language in their public acts, without having first obtained leave in *form*:* And Tiberius, himself, would not hazard the word *monopolium*, in the senate, without making an excuse for employing a foreign term.† Seneca gives it as a certain maxim, that wherever a general false taste in style and expression prevails, it is an infallible sign of a corruption of manners in that people: a liberty of introducing obsolete words, or forming new ones, is a mark, he thinks, of an equal licentiousness of the moral kind.‡ Accordingly, it is observed,|| there is scarce more than eight or ten instances of new words can be produced from the most approved Roman writers, in the course of two or three centuries. It is possible, however, a delicacy of this sort may be carried too far; and, in fact, we find some of their best writers complaining of the poverty of their language;§ notwithstanding, Tully has ventured to assert it was more copious than the Greek.**

* *Liv.* 1. 40. *c.* 42. † *Suet. in Tib. c.* 71.
‡ *Ep.* 114. || *Sanad. sur Hor.*
§ *Lucr.* 1. 832. *Quintil.* 8. 3. *Plin. Ep.* 13. 1. 4.
** *De Fin.* 1. 1. *sub init.*

character of Herennius Senecio, who was capitally convicted upon the information of Metius Carus, that the latter said to him, one day, *Pray, what business have you with my dead men? Did I ever interfere in the affair of Crassus, or Camerinus?* These, you know, were victims to Regulus, in Nero's time. For these reasons, he imagines I am highly exasperated; and, therefore, when he recited his last piece, did not give me an invitation. Besides, he has not forgotten, it seems, the dangerous snare he once laid for me, when he and I were pleading before the centumviri.* Rusticus had desired me to be counsel for Arionilla, Timon's wife: Regulus was engaged against her. In the course of my defence, I strongly insisted upon a decree which had been formerly made by the worthy Modestus, at that time banished by Domitian. Now behold Regulus in his true colours: "Pray," says he, "what are your sentiments "of Modestus?" You will easily judge how extremely hazardous it would have been to have answered in his favour, and how infamous if the reverse. But some guardian power, I am persuad-

* A select body of men who formed a court of judicature, called the centumviral court. Their jurisdiction extended chiefly, if not entirely, to questions concerning wills and intestate estates; for, though Tully, in his first book de Oratore, enumerates other points which came in question before them, yet Pitiscus* is of opinion (and with great probability) that, in latter times, their business was singly confined to the cases first mentioned. Their number, as appears by our author, amounted to 180.

* *Lex. in verb.*

ed, assisted me in this emergency. "I would tell "you my sentiments," I said, "if that were a mat- "ter for the consideration of the centumviri." Still he repeated his question. I replied, "It "was not customary to examine witnesses to the "character of a man, after sentence had passed "upon him." He pressed me a third time: "*I* "*do not inquire*," said he, "*what you think of Mo-* "*destus in general; I only ask your opinion of his* "*loyalty.*"—"Since you will have my sentiments, "then," I returned, "*I think it illegal even to ask* "*a question concerning a person who stands con-* "*victed.*" This silenced him; and I was univer- sally applauded and congratulated, that, without wounding my character by an advantageous, per- haps, though ungenerous answer, I had not entan- gled myself in so insidious a snare. Regulus, conscious of this unworthy treatment, has solicited Cœcilius Celer, and Fabius Justus, to use their interest to bring about a reconciliation between us. And, lest this should not be sufficient, he has applied also to Spurinna for the same purpose; to whom he came in the humblest manner, (for he is the most abject creature living, where he has any thing to fear) and entreated him to call upon me very early the next morning, and endeavour, by any means, to soften my resentment; "for," says he, "I can no longer support myself under this "anxiety of mind." Accordingly, I was awak- ened, the following day, with a message from Spu- rinna, informing me that he would wait upon me. I sent word back, I would call upon *him*; how-

ever, both of us mutually setting out to pay this visit, we met under Livia's portico. He acquainted me with the commission he had received from Regulus, and interceded for him, as became so worthy a man in behalf of one of a very different character, without greatly pressing the thing. I ought not, I said, to conceal from him the true state of the case, and after I should have informed him, I would leave it to himself to consider what answer was proper for me to return. "But, I cannot positively," I added, "determine any thing till Mauricus* *(who was then in exile)* shall return, by whose sentiments I think myself obliged to be entirely guided in this affair." A few days after, Regulus met me as I was attending upon the prætor, and calling me aside, said, he was afraid I deeply resented an expression he had once made use of, in his reply to me and Satrius Rufus, before the centumviri, to this purpose: *Rufus and that other, who affects to rival* Tully, *and to despise the eloquence of our age.* I answered, that now, indeed, I perceived he spoke it with a sneer, since he owned he meant it so; otherwise it might have passed for a compliment. I was free to own, I said, that I endeavoured to imitate Cicero, and was, by no means, contented with taking my example from modern eloquence; for I looked upon it as a very absurd thing not to copy the best models of every kind. But, "how happens it," continued I, "that you, who remember so well

* Brother to Rusticus Arulenus, who had been put to death upon the information of this Regulus.

what passed upon this occasion, should have forgotten that other, when you pushed me so strongly concerning the loyalty of Modestus?" Confounded by this unexpected question, pallid as he always is, he turned still paler. After a good deal of hesitation, he said, it was not at me he aimed; it was only at Modestus. Observe now, I beseech you, the implacable spirit of this fellow, who was not ashamed thus to confess himself capable of insulting the unfortunate. But the reason he gave, in justification of this infamous proceeding, is pleasant. "He wrote," said he, "in a certain letter, which was read to Domitian, that I was the most execrable of all scoundrels:" and the character Modestus gave of him was the truth, beyond all manner of controversy. Here, I think, I broke off the conversation, being desirous to reserve to myself the liberty of acting as I should see proper, when Mauricus returns. It is no easy matter, I well know, to destroy Regulus; he is rich, and at the head of a party; there are many with whom he has credit,* and more that are afraid of him: a passion that will sometimes prevail even beyond

* There seems to have been a cast of uncommon blackness in the character of this Regulus; otherwise the benevolent Pliny would scarce have singled him out, as he has in this and some following letters, for the object of his warmest contempt and indignation. Yet, infamous as he appears to have been, he was not, it seems, without his flatterers and admirers; and a contemporary poet frequently represents him as one of the most finished characters of the age, both in eloquence and virtue; particularly in the following epigram, occasioned by his escape from an imminent danger.

friendship itself. But, after all, ties of this sort are not so strong, but they may be loosened; and the popularity of a bad man is no more to be de-

Itur ad Herculei gelidas qua Tiburis arces,
Canaque sulphureis Albula fumat aquis;
Rura nemusque sacrum, dilectaque jugera Musis,
Signat vicina quartus ab urbe lapis:
Hic rudis estivas præstabat Porticus umbras;
Heu quam pæne novum Porticus ausa nefas!
Nam subito collapsa ruit, cum mole sub illa
Gestatus bijugis Regulus esset equis.
Nimirum timuit nostræ Fortuna querelas,
Quæ par tam magnæ non erat invidiæ.
Nunc et damna juvant; sunt ipsa pericula tanti:
Stantia non poterant tecta probare Deos.

MART. Lib. 1. Ep. 13.

Where leads the way to Tybur's shady towers,
And snow-white Albula sulphureous pours,
A villa stands, from Rome a little space;
And every muse delights to haunt the place.
Here once a *Portic* lent her cooling shade;
Alas! how near to impious guilt betrayed!
Sudden it fell; what time the steeds convey
Safe from her nodding walls great Regulus away.
To crush that head, not even Fortune dared,
And the world's general indignation feared.
Blest be the ruin, be the danger blest!
The *standing* pile had ne'er the gods confest.

But poets, especially needy ones, such as we know Martial was, are not generally the most faithful painters in this way; and of the two copies of Regulus now before us, there can be no doubt which most resembled the original. If antiquity had delivered down to us more of these drawings of the same persons by different hands, the truth of characters might be easier ascertained, and many of those, which we now view with high admiration, would greatly sink, *perhaps*, in our esteem; as we must have conceived a very favourable idea of Regulus, if we

pended upon than he is himself. However (to repeat it again) I shall do nothing in this affair till Mauricus returns. He is a man of sound judgment and great sagacity, formed upon long experience, and who, from his observations on the past, well knows how to judge of the future. I shall consult with him, and think myself justified either in pursuing or dropping this affair, as he shall advise. In the meanwhile, I thought I owed this account to that friendship which subsists between us, and gives you an undoubted right to be informed, not only of all my actions, but all my designs. Farewell.

LETTER. VI.

TO CORNELIUS TACITUS.

CERTAINLY you will laugh (and laugh you may) when I tell you, that your old acquaintance is turned sportsman, and has captured three noble boars. What! (you will say with astonishment) Pliny!—*Even he.* However, I indulged, at the same time, my beloved inactivity; and, whilst I sat at my nets, you would have found me, not with my spear, but my pencil and tablet by my side. I musedand wrote, being resolved, if I returned with my hands empty, at least to come

had never seen his picture but from Martial's pencil. Even Horace himself, we find giving a very different *air* to his Lollius,* from that in which he is represented by Paterculus.†

* *Lib.* 4. *Od.* 9. † *Lib.* 2. 102.

home with my memorandums full. Believe me, this manner of studying is not to be despised: you cannot conceive how greatly exercise contributes to enliven the imagination. There is, besides, something in the solemnity of the venerable woods with which one is surrounded, together with that profound silence* which is observed on these occasions, that strongly inclines the mind to meditation. For the future, therefore, let me advise you, whenever you hunt, to take along with you your pencil and tablets, as well as your basket and bottle: for be assured you will find Minerva as fond of traversing the hills as Diana. Farewell.

* By the circumstance of *silence*, here mentioned, as well as by the whole air of this letter, it is plain the hunting here recommended was of a very different kind from what is practised amongst us. It is probable the wild boars were allured into their nets by some kind of prey, with which they were baited, while the sportsman watched at a distance, in silence and concealment. Something, at least, of this manner is here plainly implied, and is necessary to be hinted to the English reader, in order to his conceiving the propriety of Pliny's sentiment, which otherwise must seem absurd. This, perhaps, was their usual method of hunting in summer; as driving these animals into toils, by the assistance of hounds, is mentioned by Horace as a winter exercise:

—Cum tonantis annus hibernus Jovis
Imbres nivesque comparat,
Trudit acres hinc et hinc multa cane
Apros in obstantes plagas. EPOD. ii.

——When rain and snows appear,
And wintry Jove loud thunders o'er the year,
With hounds he drives into the toils,
The foaming boar.—— Mr. FRANCIS.

LETTER VII.

TO OCTAVIUS RUFUS.

SEE to what an exalted station you have raised me! You have even invested me with a sovereignty equal to that which Homer attributes to his mighty Jove:

> From Heaven's imperial, Jove heard his prayer,
> Part he admits, and scatters part in air.*

'Tis thus, with a *nod* or a *frown*, I may grant or reject your petition as I see proper. To be serious, as I am at liberty, I think, to excuse myself to the Bætici,† especially at your request, from being their advocate against a single individual; so, on the other hand, to oppose a whole province, which I have long since attached to me by many good offices, and spared no pains to oblige, even at the hazard of my own interest, would be acting inconsistently with my honour, and that uniformity of conduct which I know you admire. I shall steer, therefore, in this affair, a middle course, and, of the alternatives which you propose to me, choose that which will satisfy your judgment, as well as your inclination. For I do not look upon myself obliged to consider so much what you at present desire, as what a man of your worthy character will *always* approve. I hope to be at

* Iliad. xvi. ver. 250.

† The people of Bætica, a part of Spain comprehending Andalusia and Granada.

Rome about the 15th of October, when we will join our united credit with Gallus, in convincing him of the reasonableness of my offer. In the mean while, you may assure him of my good disposition towards him :

——— The sire of men and gods,
With gracious aspect mild, compliance nods.†

For why should I not continue to quote Homer's verses, since you will not put it in my power to quote any of yours ? which yet I so passionately wish for, that I question whether I could withstand such a bribe, even to plead against my old clients, the good people of Bætica. I had almost forgotten to mention (what, however, is of too much importance to be omitted) that I have received the excellent dates you sent me. They are likely to prove very powerful rivals to my favourite figs and morells. Farewell.

LETTER VIII.

TO POMPEIUS SATURNINUS.

NOTHING could be more seasonable than the letter I received from you, wherein you desire me to communicate to you some of my compositions : I was at that very time designing to send you one. Your request, therefore, has forwarded my intentions, and freed me from every thing that I had to apprehend either from your

† Iliad. 1. v. 518.

refusal of this trouble, or my scruples to give it you. Without hesitation, then, I make use of your offer, as you must now take the consequence of it without reluctance. But you must not expect from a man of my indolence any thing new. On the contrary, I am going to entreat you to revise again the speech I made to my countrymen, when I dedicated the public library which I founded for their use. You have already, I remember, obliged me with some remarks upon this piece: I now beg of you, not only to take a general view of the whole, but distinctly to criticise it, with your usual accuracy, in all its parts. When you have corrected it, I shall still be at liberty either to publish or suppress it: and the delay, in the mean time, will be attended with one of these alternatives; for, while we are deliberating whether it is fit for the public view, a frequent revisal will either make it so, or convince me that it is not. Though, indeed, the principal difficulty with me concerning the publication of this harangue, does not arise so much from the composition itself, as from the subject, which has something in it, I fear, that will look like ostentation. For, be the style ever so plain and unornamented, yet, as the occasion necessarily led me to speak not only of the munificence of my ancestors, but of my own; my modesty will be greatly embarrassed. A dangerous and slippery situation this, even when one is led into it, by a plea of necessity! For, if mankind are not very favourable to panegyric, even when given us by others; how

much more difficult is it to reconcile them to it, when it is a tribute which we pay to ourselves or to our ancestors? Honourable actions, though stripped of all external advantages, are generally the object of envy, but particularly so, when glory is her attendant; and the world is never so little disposed to detract from the rectitude of your conduct, as when it passes unobserved and unapplauded. For these reasons, I frequently ask myself, whether I composed this harangue, such as it is, merely from a personal consideration, or with a view also to the public; and I am sensible, that what may be exceedingly expedient and proper in the prosecution of any affair, may lose all its grace and fitness the moment the business is completed: for instance, in the case before us, nothing could be more to my purpose than to explain at large the motives of my intended bounty; for, by this means, I accustomed my mind to generous sentiments; grew more enamoured of the lovely forms by frequent attention to them; and guarded, at the same time, against that repentance, which usually attends a hasty execution of liberalities not well considered. There arose, also, a farther advantage from this method, as it fixed in me a certain habitual contempt of money. For, while mankind seem to be universally governed by an innate passion to accumulate wealth; the cultivation of a more generous affection in my own breast, taught me to emancipate myself from the slavery of so predominant a principle: And I thought my honest intentions would be the

more meritorious, as they should appear to proceed, not from a sudden start of munificence, but from the dictates of cool and deliberate reflection. I considered, besides, the nature of my designs; I was not engaging myself to exhibit public games or gladiatorial combats, but to establish an annual fund for the support and education of ingenious youths. The pleasures of the senses are so far from wanting the oratorial arts to recommend them, that we stand in need of all the powers of eloquence, to moderate and restrain their influence. But to prevail with those who are capable of the office, to undertake with cheerfulness the disagreeable business of education; it is necessary to apply, in the most artful manner, not only to their interest, but their passions. If physicians find it expedient to use the most insinuating address in recommending to their patients a wholesome, though, perhaps, unpleasant regimen; how much more occasion had *he* to exert all the powers of persuasion, who, out of regard to the public welfare, was endeavouring to reconcile it to a most useful, though not very popular benefaction? particularly, as my aim was to recommend an institution, calculated solely for the benefit of those who were parents, to men, who, at present, had no children; and to persuade the greater number patiently to wait till they should be entitled to an honour, of which a *few* only could immediately partake. But as at that time, when I attempted to explain and enforce the design and benefit of my institution, I considered more the general

good of my countrymen, than any reputation which might result to myself; so I am apprehensive, if I should publish this piece, it will seem as if I had a view rather to my own glory, than to the benefit of others. I am very sensible how much nobler it is to place the reward of virtue in the silent approbation of one's own breast, than in the applause of the world. Fame ought to be the consequence, not the motive of our actions; and though it should happen not to attend the worthy deed, yet is it by no means the less meritorious for having missed the applause it deserved. But the world is apt to suspect, that those, who celebrate their own beneficent acts, performed them for no other motive than to have the pleasure of extolling them. Thus, the splendour of an action, which would have been deemed illustrious if related by another, is totally extinguished when it becomes the subject of one's own applause. Such is the disposition of mankind, if they cannot blast the action, they will censure the vanity; and whether you do what does not deserve particular notice, or set forth yourself what does, either way you incur reproach. In my own case, there is a peculiar circumstance that weighs much with me. This speech was delivered not before a general assembly of the people of Rome, but the Decurii;* not in the forum, but a municipal assembly; I doubt, therefore, it will appear inconsistent that I, who, when I spoke it, seemed to endeavour to avoid

* The Decurii were a sort of senators in the municipal or corporate cities of Italy.

popular applause, should now, by publishing this performance, appear to court it: that I, who was so scrupulous as not to admit even those persons to be present when I pronounced this discourse, who were interested in my benefaction, lest it might be suspected I was actuated in this affair by any ambitious views; should now seem to solicit admiration, by forwardly displaying it to such as have no other concern in my munificence, than the benefit of example. These are the scruples which have occasioned my delaying to give this piece to the public; but I submit them entirely to your judgment, which I shall ever esteem as a sufficient sanction of my conduct. Farewell.

LETTER IX.

TO MINUTIUS FUNDANUS.

WHEN one considers how the time passes at Rome, one cannot but be surprised, that, take any single day, and it either is, or at least seems to be, spent reasonably enough; and yet, upon casting up the whole sum, the amount will appear quite otherwise. Ask any one, how he has been employed to-day? He will tell you, perhaps, "I have "been at the ceremony of investing the *manly* "*robe*;* *this* friend invited me to a wedding; *that*

* The Roman youths, at the age of seventeen, changed their habit, and took up the *toga virilis*, or manly gown; upon which occasion they were conducted, by the friends of the family, with great ceremony, either into the forum or capitol, and there invested with this new robe.

"desired me to attend the hearing of his cause; "*one* begged me to be witness to his will; "*another* called me to a consultation." These are offices, which seem, while one is engaged in them, extremely necessary; and yet, when, in the silence of retirement, we look back upon the many hours thus employed, we cannot but condemn them as solemn impertinences. At such a season one is apt to reflect, *How much of my life has been spent in trifles!* At least, it is a reflection which frequently occurs to me at Laurentum, after I have been employing myself in my studies, or even in the necessary care of the animal machine (for the body must be repaired and supported, if we would preserve the mind in all its vigour.) In that peaceful retreat, I neither hear nor speak any thing of which I have occasion to repent. I suffer none to repeat to me the whispers of slander; nor do I censure any man, unless myself, when I am dissatisfied with my compositions. *There* I live undisturbed by rumour, and free from the anxious solicitudes of hope or fear, conversing only with myself and my books. True and genuine life! pleasing and honourable repose! More, perhaps, to be desired than employments of any kind! Thou solemn sea and solitary shore, best and most retired scene for contemplation, with how many noble thoughts have ye inspired me! Snatch then, my friend, as I have, the first occasion of leaving the noisy town, with all its frivolous pursuits, and devote your days to study, or even resign them to indolence; for, as my inge-

nious friend Attilius pleasantly said, "It is better "to have nothing to do, than to be *doing* nothing." Farewell.

LETTER X.

TO ATRIUS CLEMENS.

IF ever polite literature flourished at Rome, it certainly flourishes now; and I could give you many eminent instances: I will content myself, however, with naming only Euphrates, the philosopher. I first became acquainted with this excellent person in my youth, when I served in the army of Syria. I had an opportunity of conversing with him familiarly, and took some pains to gain his affection: though that, indeed, was nothing difficult, for he is exceedingly open to access, and actuated by those social principles he professes to teach. I should think myself extremely happy if I had as fully answered the expectations he, at that time, conceived of me, as he exceeds every thing I had imagined of him. But, perhaps, I admire his excellencies more now, than I did then, because I know better how to appreciate them; if I can with truth say, I yet know. For, as none but those who are skilled in painting, statuary, or the plastic art, can form a right judgment of any performance in those respective modes of representation, so a man must, himself, have made great advances in philosophy, before he is capable of forming a just opinion of a philosopher. However, as far as I am qualified to

determine, Euphrates is possessed of so many shining talents, that he cannot fail to strike the most injudicious observer. He reasons with much force, acuteness, and elegance; and frequently rises into all the sublime and luxuriant eloquence of Plato. His style is rich and flowing, and, at the same time, so wonderfully captivating, that he forces the reluctant attention of the most unwilling hearer. His outward appearance is agreeable to all the rest; a fine stature, a comely aspect, long hair, and a large silver beard: circumstances which, though they may probably be thought trifling and accidental, contribute, however, to gain him much reverence. There is no affected negligence in his habit; his countenance is grave, but not austere; and his approach commands respect, without creating awe. Distinguished as he is by the sanctity of his manners, he is no less so by his polite and affable address. He points his eloquence against the vices, not the persons of mankind; and, without severity, reclaims the wanderer from the paths of virtue. His exhortations so captivate your attention, that you hang, as it were, upon his lips; and even after the heart is convinced, the ear still wishes to listen to the harmonious reasoner. His family consists of three children, (two of which are sons) whom he educates with the utmost care. His father-in-law, Pompeius Julianus, as he greatly distinguished himself in every other part of his life, so particularly in this, that, though he was himself of the highest rank in his province, yet,

among many considerable competitors for his daughter, he preferred Euphrates, as first in merit, though not in dignity. But to dwell any longer upon the virtues of a man, whose conversation I am so unfortunate as not to have leisure sufficiently to enjoy; what would it avail but to increase my regret? My time is wholly taken up in the execution of a very honourable, indeed, but very troublesome employment; in hearing causes, answering petitions, passing accounts, and writing letters;—but letters, alas! where genius has no share. I sometimes complain to Euphrates (for I have leisure at least to *complain*) of these unpleasing occupations. He endeavours to comfort me, by affirming, that to be engaged in the service of the public, to hear and determine causes, to explain the laws, and administer justice, is a part, and the noblest part too, of philosophy; as it is reducing to practice what her professors teach in speculation. It may be so: but that it is as *agreeable* as to spend whole days in attending to his useful conversation, even *his* rhetoric will never be able to convince me. I cannot, therefore, but strongly recommend it to you, who have leisure, the next time you come to Rome, (and you will come, I dare say, so much the sooner) to take the benefit of his elegant and refined instructions. I am not, you see, in the number of those who envy others the happiness they cannot share themselves; on the contrary, it is a very sensible pleasure to me, when I find my friends in pos-

session of an enjoyment, from which I have the misfortune to be excluded. Farewell.

LETTER XI.

TO FABIUS JUSTUS.

IT is long since I received a letter from you. You will allege, perhaps, you have nothing to write; but let me have the satisfaction, at least, of seeing it under your hand, that you have nothing to write, or tell me, in the good old style, *If you are well, I am well.* I shall be contented even with that; as, indeed, that single circumstance from a friend includes every thing. You may possibly think I jest; but, believe me, I am perfectly in earnest. In short, all I desire is, to know how it is with you; for I can no longer remain in this ignorance without the utmost anxiety. Farewell.

LETTER XII.

TO CALESTRIUS TIRO.

I HAVE suffered a most sensible *loss*; if that word is sufficiently strong to express the misfortune which has deprived me of so excellent a man. Corellius Rufus is dead! and dead, too, by his own act! a circumstance of great aggravation to my affliction; as that sort of death which we cannot impute either to the course of nature, or the hand of Providence, is, of all others, the most to be lamented. It affords some consolation in the loss

of those friends whom disease snatches from us, that they fall by the general destiny of mankind; but those, who destroy themselves, leave us under the inconsolable reflection, that they had it in their power to have lived longer. 'Tis true, Corellius had many inducements to be fond of life; a blameless conscience, high reputation, and great dignity of character, together with all the tender endearments of a wife, a daughter, a grandson, and sisters; and amidst these considerable pledges of happiness, he had many and faithful friends. Still, it must be owned, he had the highest reason (which, to a wise man, will always have the force of the strongest obligation) to determine him in this resolution. He had long laboured under so tedious and painful a distemper, that even these blessings, great and valuable as they are, could not balance the evils he suffered. In his thirty-third year, (as I have frequently heard him say) he was seized with the gout in his feet. This distemper he received from his father; sin transmitted by inheritance. A life of abstinence and virtue had somewhat broken the force of this distemper while he had strength and youth to struggle with it; as a manly courage supported him under the increasing weight of it in his old age. I remember, in the reign of Domitian, to have made him a visit at his villa, near Rome, where I found him under the utmost tortures; for the gout was not only in his feet, but had spread itself over his whole body. As soon as I entered his chamber, his servants withdrew; for it was his

constant rule, never to suffer them to be present when any very intimate friend was with him: he even carried it so far as to dismiss his wife upon such occasions, though worthy of the highest confidence. Casting his eyes round the room, "Do "you know," says he, "why I endure life under "these cruel agonies? It is with the hope that I "may outlive, at least for one day, that villain.* "And Oh! ye gods, had you given me strength, "as you have given me resolution, I would infalli- "bly have that pleasure!" Heaven heard his prayer; and, having survived that tyrant, and lived to see liberty restored, he broke through those other great, but now less forcible attachments to the world, since he could leave it in possession of security and freedom. His malady increased; and, as it now grew too violent to admit of any relief from temperance, he resolutely determined to put an end to its uninterrupted attacks, by an effort of heroism. He had refused all sustenance during four days, when his wife Hispulla sent our common friend Geminius to me, with the melancholy news, that he was resolved to die; and that she and her daughter having in vain joined in their most tender persuasions to divert him from his purpose, the only hope they had now left was my endeavours to reconcile him to life. I ran to his house with the utmost precipitation. As I approached it, I met a second messenger from Hispulla, who informed me there was nothing to be hoped for, even from me, as he now seemed more inflexible than

* Domitian.

ever in his resolution. What confirmed their fears was an expression he made use of to his physician, who pressed him to take some nourishment. "'Tis resolved," he replied; an expression which, as it raised my admiration of his greatness of soul, so it does my grief, for the loss of him. I am every moment reflecting what a valuable friend, what an excellent man, I am deprived of. That he was arrived to his sixty-seventh year, which is an age even the strongest seldom exceed, I well know; that he is delivered from a life of continual pain; that he left his family and (what he loved even more) his country in a flourishing state: all this I know. Still I cannot forbear to lament him, as if he had been in the prime and vigour of his days; and I lament him (shall I own my weakness?) upon a private account. For I have lost, oh! my friend, I have lost the witness, the guide, and the governor of my life! And,—to confess to you as I did to Calvisius, in the first transport of my grief,—I sadly fear, now that I am no longer under his eye, I shall not keep so strict a guard over my conduct. Speak comfort to me, not that *he was old, he was infirm:* all this I know; but by supplying me with some reflections that are uncommon and resistless, that neither the commerce of the world, nor the precepts of the philosophers, can teach me. For all that I have heard, and all that I have read, occur to me of themselves; but all these are by far too weak to support me under so severe an affliction. Farewell.

LETTER XIII.

TO SOCIUS SENECIO.

THIS year has proved extremely fertile in poetical productions: during the whole month of April, scarce a day has passed wherein we have not been entertained with the recital of some poem. It is a pleasure to me to find, notwithstanding there seems to be so little disposition in the public to attend assemblies of this kind, that a taste for polite literature still exists, and men of genius are not discouraged from producing their performances. It is visible, the greater part of the audience, which is collected upon these occasions, come with reluctance, loiter round the place of assembly, join in little parties of conversation, and are perpetually sending to inquire whether the author had made his entrance, whether he has read the preface, or whether he has almost finished the piece. Then, with an air of the greatest indifference, they just look in, and withdraw again; some by stealth, and others with less ceremony. It was not thus in the time of our ancestors. It is reported, that Claudius Cæsar, one day hearing a noise near his palace, inquired the occasion; and being informed that Nonianus was reciting a composition of his, went immediately to the place, and agreeably surprised the author with his presence. But now, were one to bespeak the company even of the most idle man living, and remind him of the appointment ever so

often, or ever so long beforehand; either he would avoid it under pretence of forgetfulness, or, if not, would look upon it as so much time lost; and for no other reason, perhaps, but because he had *not* lost it. So much the rather do *those* authors deserve our encouragement and applause, who have resolution to persevere in their studies, and exhibit their performances, notwithstanding this fastidiousness, or indifference of their audience. For my part, I scarce ever refuse to be present upon such occasions; though, to say truth, the authors have generally been my friends, as, indeed, there are few men of genius who are not. It is this has kept me in town longer than I intended. I am now, however, at liberty to return into the country, and compose something myself; but without any intention of reciting it, lest I should seem to have rather *lent* than given my attendance to those recitations of my friends; for in these, as in all other good offices, the obligation ceases the moment you seem to expect a return. Farewell.

LETTER XIV.

TO JUNIUS MAURICUS.

YOU desire me to look out a proper husband for your niece: it is with justice you enjoin me that office. You were a witness to the esteem and affection I bore that great man, her father, and with what noble instructions he formed my youth, and taught me to deserve those praises he was pleased to bestow upon me. You could not give,

me, then, a more important, or more agreeable commission; nor could I be employed in an office of higher honour, than that of choosing a young man worthy of being father of the grandchildren of Rusticus Arulenus; a choice I should be long in determining, if I were not acquainted with Minutius Æmilianus, who seems formed for our purpose. He loves me with all that warmth of affection which is usual between young men of equal years, (as, indeed, I have the advance of him but by a very few) and reveres me, at the same time, with all the deference due to age; and, in a word, he is no less desirous to model himself by my instructions, than I was by those of yourself and your brother. He is a native of Brixia,* one of those provinces in Italy which still retain much of the frugal simplicity and purity of ancient manners. He is the son of Minutius Macrinus, whose humble desires were satisfied with standing at the head of the equestrian order:† for though he was nominated by Vespasian among those whom that prince dignified with the prætorian office, yet, with an inflexible greatness of mind, he resolutely preferred an elegant repose, to the ambitious, shall I call them, or honourable pursuits, in which we in public life are engaged? His grand-mother, on the mother's side, is Serrana Procula, of Padua: you are no stranger to the character of its citizens; yet Serrana is looked upon, even among these people of correct manners, as an exemplary in-

* A town in the territories of Venice, now called Brescia.

† See page 47, note.

stance of strict virtue. Acillius, his uncle, is a man of singular gravity, wisdom, and integrity. In short, you will find nothing throughout his family unworthy of yours. Minutius himself has great vivacity, as well as application, together with a most amiable and becoming modesty. He has already, with much credit, passed through the offices of quæstor, tribune, and prætor; so that you will be spared the trouble of soliciting for him those honourable employments. He has a genteel and florid countenance, with a certain noble mien that speaks the man of distinction: advantages, I think, by no means to be slighted, and which I consider as the proper tribute to virgin innocence. I am doubtful whether I should add, that his father is very rich. When I contemplate the character of those who require a husband of my choosing, I know it is unnecessary to mention wealth; but when I reflect upon the prevailing manners of the age, and even the laws of Rome, which rank a man according to his possessions, it certainly claims some regard; and, indeed, in establishments of this nature, where children and many other circumstances are to be duly weighed, it is an article that well deserves to be taken into the account. You will be inclined, perhaps, to suspect that affection has had too great a share in the character I have been drawing, and that I have heightened it beyond the truth: but I will stake all my credit, that you will find every circumstance far beyond what I have represented. I confess, indeed, I love Minutius (as he justly

deserves) with the warmth of a most ardent affection; but for that very reason I would not ascribe more to his merit than I know it will support. Farewell.

LETTER XV.

TO SEPTITIUS CLARUS.

HOW happened it, my friend, that you did not keep your engagement the other night to sup with me? But take notice, justice is to be had, and I expect you shall fully reimburse me the expense I was at to treat you; which, let me tell you, was no small sum. I had prepared, you must know, a lettuce a-piece, three snails,* two eggs, and a barley cake, with some sweet wine and snow:† the snow most certainly I shall charge

* The English reader may probably be surprised to find this article in Pliny's philosophical bill of fare; it will not be improper, therefore, to inform him, that a dish of snails was very common at a Roman table. The manner used to fatten them is related by some very grave authors of antiquity; and Pliny the elder mentions one Fulvius Hirpinus, who had studied that art with so much success, that the shells of some of his snails would contain about ten quarts. [H. N. i. 9. 56.] In some parts of Switzerland this food is still in high repute. See ADDISON's *Trav.* p. 364.

† The Romans used snow not only to cool their liquors, but their stomachs, after having inflamed themselves with high eating: *Nivem rodunt*, says Seneca, *solatium stomachi æstuantis.*—[*Ep.* 95.] This custom still prevails in Italy, especially at Naples, where (as Mr. Addison observes) they "drink very few liquors, not so much as water, that have not lain in *fresco*, and every body, from the highest to the lowest, makes use of it; insomuch, that a scarcity of snow would raise a mu-

to your account, as a rarity that will not keep. Besides all these curious dishes, there were olives of Andalusia, gourds, shalots, and a hundred other dainties equally sumptuous. You should likewise have been entertained either with an interlude, the rehearsal of a poem, or a piece of music, as you liked best; or (such was my liberality) with all three. But the luxurious delicacies* and Spanish dancers of a certain —— I know not how, were, it seems, more to your taste. However, I shall have my revenge of you, depend upon it;—in what manner, shall at present be a secret. In good truth it was not kind, thus to mortify your friend—I had almost said yourself?—and, upon second thoughts, I do say so: for how agreeably

tiny at Naples, as much as a dearth of corn or provisions in another country." *Trav.* 185.

* In the original, the dishes are specified, viz. oysters, the matrices of sows, with a certain sea shell-fish, prickly like a hedge-hog, called *Echinus*, all in the highest estimation among the Roman admirers of table luxury, as appears by numberless passages in the classic writers. Our own country had the honour to furnish them with oysters, which they fetched from Sandwich: Montanus, mentioned by Juvenal, was so well skilled in the science of good eating, that he could tell, by the first taste, whether they came from that coast:

> ——*Circæis nota forent, an*
> *Lucrinum ad Saxum*, Rupinove *edita fundo*
> *Ostrea, callebat primo deprendere morsu.*
>
> Sat. IV. 140.

> He, whether Circe's rock his oysters bore,
> Or Lucrine lake, or the *Ratupian* shore,
> Knew at first taste.——————
>
> Mr. Duke.

should we have spent the evening, in laughing, trifling, and literary amusements! You may sup, I confess, at many places more splendidly; but you can no where be treated with more unconstrained cheerfulness, simplicity, and freedom: only make the experiment; and if you do not ever afterwards prefer my table to any other, never favour me with your company again. Farewell.

LETTER XVI.

TO ERUCIUS.

I CONCEIVED an affection for my friend Pompeius Saturninus, and admired his genius, even long before I knew the extensive variety of his talents: but he has now taken full and unreserved possession of my whole heart. I have heard him, in the unpremeditated as well as studied speech, plead with no less force and energy, than grace and eloquence. He abounds with just reflections; his periods are graceful and majestic; his words harmonious, and stamped with the mark of genuine antiquity. These united qualities infinitely delight you, not only when you are carried along, if I may so say, with the resistless flow of his charming and emphatical elocution, but also when considered distinctly and apart from that advantage. I am persuaded you will be of this opinion when you peruse his orations, and will not hesitate to place him in the same rank with the ancients, whom he so happily emulates. But you will view him with increased pleasure in the char-

acter of an historian, in which his style is both concise and clear, elegant and sublime; and the same strength of expression, though more compressed, runs through his historical harangues, which so eminently distinguishes and adorns his public orations. But these are not the whole of his excellencies; he has composed several poetical pieces in the manner of Calvus and Catullus. What strokes of wit, what sweetness of numbers, what pointed satire, and what touches of the tender passion appear in his verses! in the midst of which he sometimes designedly falls into an agreeable negligence in his metre, in the manner, too, of those admired poets. He read to me, the other day, some letters, which he assured me were written by his wife: I fancied I was perusing Plautus or Terence in prose. Whether they are that lady's, (as he positively affirms) or his own, which he absolutely denies, he deserves equal applause; either for writing so politely himself, or for having so highly improved and refined the genius of his wife, whom he married young and uninstructed. His works are ever in my hands; and I never sit down to compose any thing of my own, or to revise what I have already written, or am in a disposition to amuse myself, that I do not take up this agreeable author; and, as often as I do so, he is still new. Let me strongly recommend him to the same degree of intimacy with you; nor be it any objection to his works, that he is a contemporary author. Had he flourished in some former age, not only his publications, but pic-

tures and statues, representing his person, would have been passionately inquired after: shall we, then, from a sort of satiety, and merely because he is present among us, suffer his talents to languish and fade away, unhonoured and unadmired? It is surely a very perverse and envious disposition, to look with indifference upon a man worthy of the highest approbation, for no other reason, but because we have it in our power to see him, and to converse with him, and not only to give him our applause, but our friendship. Farewell.

LETTER XVII.

TO CORNELIUS TITIANUS.

THE social virtues have not yet quite forsaken the world; and there are still those whose generous esteem extends even to departed merit. Titianus Capito has obtained the emperor's permission to erect a statue in the forum to the late L. Syllanus. It is a truly laudable and noble application of princely favour, to employ it to so worthy a purpose, and to exert one's interest for the glory of others. To preserve the memory of eminent characters, is, indeed, habitual to Capito: he has placed in his house (where he may safely take that liberty) the statues of the Bruti, the Cassii, and the Catos,* which he not only con-

* Suetonius informs us, that Caligula destroyed the statues of those illustrious persons, which Augustus had erected in the capitol; and published an edict, whereby he prohibited statues to be raised to any person in his life-time, unless by

templates with ardent veneration, but has also celebrated the respective lives of those great patriots in some excellent verses. One may be very sure a person possesses great virtue himself, who thus admires it in others. Capito has, by this act, secured to himself that immortality, which he has bestowed on Syllanus; for, he who erects a statue in the Roman forum to a worthy character, receives as much honour as he confers. Farewell.

LETTER XVIII.

TO SUETONIUS TRANQUILLUS.

YOUR letter informs me, that you are extremely alarmed by a dream; apprehending, that it forebodes some ill success to you in the cause you have undertaken to defend; and, therefore, desire that I would get it adjourned for a few days, or, at least, to the next. This is a favour, you are sensible, not very easily obtained, but I will use all my interest for that purpose;

——For dreams descend from Jove."—HOM.

In the mean while, it is very material for you to recollect, whether your dreams† generally

the emperor's express permission. It is probable, Pliny here alludes to a decree of this nature made by some succeeding emperor, perhaps Domitian, against publicly erecting statues to these glorious assertors of liberty.

* POPE, *Iliad* I. 63.

† Dreams were considered, from the earliest antiquity, as sacred admonitions and hints of futurity. Many of the heathen oracles were delivered in this manner; and, even among

represent things as they afterwards fall out, or quite the reverse. But if I may judge of yours by one that happened to myself, you have nothing to fear; for, it portends you will acquit yourself with great success. I had promised to be counsel for Julius Pastor; when I fancied in my sleep that my mother-in-law came to me, and, throwing herself at my feet, earnestly entreated me not to be concerned in the cause. I was at that time a very young man; the case was to be argued in the four centumviral courts; my adversaries were some of the most considerable men in Rome, and particular favourites of Cæsar; any of which circumstances were sufficient, after such an inauspicious dream, to have discouraged me. Notwithstanding this, I engaged in the cause, reflecting that,

the Jews, we find several intimations conveyed to their prophets in the same way. The Romans, in general, were great observers of dreams; and Augustus Cæsar is said to have escaped a very imminent danger at the battle of Philippi, by quitting his tent in compliance with a dream of Antonius, his physician. (*Val. Max.* L. I. C. 7.) This is mentioned to obviate any prejudice against Pliny, which may arise in the mind of a reader unacquainted with the prevailing sentiments of the ancients upon this point, who might otherwise be surprised to find our author talk seriously upon a subject of this nature. The truth is, as an eminent critic (*Dacier sur Hor.* L. II. Ep. 2.) has observed, with great good sense, there seems to be as much temerity in never giving credit to dreams, as there is superstition in always doing so. "It appears to me," says he, "that the true medium between these two extremes, is to treat them as we would a known liar; we are sure he most usually relates falsehoods; however, nothing hinders but he may sometimes speak truth."

Without a sign, his sword the brave man draws,
And asks no omen but his country's cause*—

for I looked upon the promise I had given to be as sacred to me as my country, or, if that were possible, more so. The event happened as I wished; and it was that very cause which first procured me the favourable attention of the public, and threw open to me the gates of Fame. Consider then, whether your dream, like that which I have related, may not pre-signify success. But, after all, perhaps you will think it more safe to pursue this cautious maxim: "never do a thing, concerning "the rectitude of which you are in doubt:" if so, write me word. In the interval, I will consider of some expedient, and endeavour that your cause shall be heard any day you like best. In this respect, you are in a better situation than I was: the court of the centumviri, where I was to plead, admits of no adjournment; whereas, in that where your cause is to be heard, though it is not easy to procure one, still, however, it is possible. Farewell.

LETTER XIX.

TO ROMANUS FIRMUS.

AS you are my town's-man, my school-fellow, and the earliest companion of my youth; as there was the strictest friendship between my mother and uncle, and your father; (a happiness which I also enjoyed as far as the great inequality

* *Iliad XII.* 243. POPE.

of our ages would admit,) can I fail (thus biassed as I am by so many strong and weighty reasons,) to contribute all in my power to the advancement of your honours? The rank you bear in our province, as decurio, is a proof that you are possessed, at least, of an hundred thousand sesterces;* but that we may also have the satisfaction of seeing you a Roman† knight, I present to you three hundred thousand,‡ in order to make up the sum requisite to entitle you to that dignity. The long acquaintance we have had, leaves me no room to doubt you will ever be forgetful of this instance of my friendship. And I know your disposition much too well to think it necessary to advise you to enjoy this honour with the modesty that becomes a person who received it from me: for the advanced rank we possess by the good offices of a

* About 800l. of our money. The sesterce was a Roman silver coin, the value of which the most accurate antiquarians have settled at 1 penny, 3 farthings, and 3-4ths, making 1000 to be equal to 8l. 1s. 5d. half-penny; but, to avoid fractions in this place, and throughout all the following calculations, a thousand sesterces are considered as equivalent to only 8l. sterling.

† "The equestrian dignity, or that order of the Roman people which we commonly call *knights*, had nothing in it analogous to any order of modern knighthood, but depended entirely upon a valuation of their estates; and every citizen, whose entire fortunes amounted to 400,000 sesterces, that is, 3229l. of our money, was enrolled, of course, in the list of knights, who were considered as a middle order between the senators and common people, yet, without any other distinction than the privilege of wearing a gold ring, which was the peculiar badge of their order." *Life of Tully*, Vol. I. III. *in not.*

‡ About 2400l. sterling.

friend, is a kind of sacred trust, wherein we have *his* judgment, as well as our *own character*, to maintain, and therefore to be guarded with the greater caution.

LETTER XX.

TO CORNELIUS TACITUS.

I HAVE frequent debates with a learned and judicious person of my acquaintance, who admires nothing so much in the eloquence of the bar, as conciseness. I agree with him, where the cause will admit of this precision, it may be properly adopted; but insist, that to omit what is material to be mentioned, or only slightly to touch upon those points which should be strongly inculcated, and impressed on the minds of the audience, is, in effect, to desert the cause one has undertaken. In many cases, a copious manner of expression gives strength and weight to our ideas, which frequently make their effect upon the mind, as iron does upon solid bodies, rather by repeated strokes than a single blow. In answer to this, he usually has recourse to authorities, and produces Lysias amongst the Grecians, together with Cato and the two Gracchi, among our own countrymen, as instances in favour of the concise style. In return, I name Demosthenes, Æschines, Hyperides, and many others in opposition to Lysias; while I confront Cato and the Gracchi, as also Cæsar, Pollio, Cœlius, but above all, Cicero, whose longest oration is generally esteemed the best. It is

in good compositions, as in every thing else that is valuable; the more there is of them, the better. You may observe in statues, basso-relievos, pictures, and the bodies of men, and even in animals and trees, that nothing is more graceful than magnitude, if accompanied with proportion. The same holds true in pleading; and even in books, a large volume carries somewhat of beauty and authority in its very size. My antagonist, who is extremely dexterous at evading an argument, eludes all this, and much more, which I usually urge to the same purpose, by insisting that those very persons, upon whose works I found my opinion, made considerable additions to their orations when they published them. This I deny; and appeal to the harangues of numberless orators, particularly to those of Cicero, for Murena and Varenus, where he seems to have given us little more than the general charge. Whence it appears, that many things which he enlarged upon at the time he delivered those orations, were retrenched when he gave them to the public. The same excellent orator informs us, that, agreeably to the ancient custom, which allowed only of one counsel on a side, Cluentius had no other advocate than himself; and he tells us further, that he employed four whole days in defence of Cornelius; by which it plainly appears, that those orations which, when delivered at their full length, had necessarily taken up so much time at the bar, were greatly altered and abridged when he afterwards comprised them in a single volume, though, I must confess, indeed, a large one. But it is objected, there is a wide difference between good pleading

and just composition. This opinion, I acknowledge, has had some favourers, and it may be true; nevertheless, I am persuaded (though I may, perhaps, be mistaken) that, as it is possible a pleading may be well received by the audience, which has not merit enough to recommend it to the reader; so a good oration cannot be a bad pleading: for the oration on paper is, in truth, the original and model of the speech that was pronounced. It is for this reason we find, in many of the best orations extant, numberless expressions which have the air of unpremeditated discourse; and even in those which we are sure were never spoken; as, for instance, in the following passage from the oration against Verres.—"A certain mechanic—what's "his name? Oh, I'm obliged to you for helping "me to it: yes, I mean Polycletus." It cannot then be denied, that the nearer approach a speaker makes to the rules of just composition, the more perfect he will be in his art; always supposing, however, that he has the necessary indulgence in point of time; for, if he be limited in that article, no blame can justly be fixed upon the advocate, though much certainly upon the judge. The sense of the laws, I am sure, is on my side, which are by no means sparing of the orator's time: it is not brevity, but copiousness, a full representation of every material circumstance, which they recommend. And how is it possible for an advocate to acquit himself of that duty, unless in the most insignificant causes, if he affect to be concise? Let me add what experience, that unerring guide, has taught me: it has frequently been my province to

act both as an advocate and a judge; and I have often also attended as an assessor.* Upon those occasions, I have ever found the judgments of mankind are to be influenced by different modes of application, and that the slightest circumstances frequently produce the most important consequences. There is so vast a variety in the dispositions and understandings of men, that they seldom agree in their opinions concerning any one point in debate before them; or, if they do, it is generally from the movement of different passions. Besides, as every man naturally favours his own discoveries, when he hears an argument urged which had before occurred to himself, he will certainly embrace it as extremely convincing. The orator, therefore, should so adapt himself to his audience, as to throw out something which every one of them, in turn, may receive and approve as conformable to his own particular sentiments. I remember when Regulus and I were concerned together in a cause, he said to me, "You seem to think it necessary to "dwell upon every single circumstance: whereas I "always take aim at once at my adversary's throat, "and there I closely press him." ('Tis true, he tenaciously holds whatever part he has once fixed upon; but the misfortune is, he is extremely apt to mistake the right place.) I answered, it might possibly happen, that what he called the *throat*, was, in reality, some less vital part. As for myself, said I, who do not pretend to direct my aim

* The prætor was assisted by ten assessors, five of whom were senators, and the rest knights. With these he was obliged to consult before he pronounced sentence.

with so much certainty, I attack every part, and push at every opening; in short, to use a vulgar proverb, *I leave no stone unturned.* As in agriculture, it is not my vineyards, or my woods alone, but my fields also, that I cultivate; and (to pursue the allusion) as I do not content myself with sowing those fields with only one kind of grain, but employ several different sorts; so, in my pleadings at the bar, I scatter various arguments like so many kinds of seed, in order to reap from thence whatever may happen to succeed: for the disposition of your judges is as precarious, and as little to be ascertained, as that of soils and seasons. I remember the comic writer Eupolis mentions it in praise of that excellent orator Pericles, that

> On his lips Persuasion hung,
> And powerful Reason rul'd his tongue:
> Thus he alone could boast the art,
> To charm at once, and pierce the heart.

But could Pericles, without the richest variety of expression, and merely by force of the concise or the rapid style, or both together, (for they are extremely different) have thus *charmed* and *pierced* the heart? To delight and to persuade, requires time, and a great compass of language; and to leave a *sting* in the minds of his audience, is an effect not to be expected from an orator who slightly pushes, but from him, and him only, who thrusts home and deep. Another comic poet,* speaking of the same orator, says,

* Aristophanes.

His mighty words like Jove's own thunder roll;
Greece hears, and trembles to her inmost soul.

But it is not the close and the reserved; it is the copious, the majestic, and the sublime orator, who, with the lightning and thunder of his eloquence, hurries you impetuously along, and bears down all before him. There is a just mean, I own, in every thing; but he equally misseth the mark, who falls short of it, as he who goes beyond it; he who confines himself in too narrow a compass, as he who launches out with too great a latitude. Hence it is as common to hear our orators condemned for being too barren, as too luxuriant; for not reaching, as well as for overflowing the bounds of their subject. Both, no doubt, are equally distant from the proper medium; but with this difference, however, that in the one the fault arises from an abundance, in the other, from a deficiency; an error, which, if it be not a sign of a more correct, yet, it is certainly of a more fertile genius. When I say this, I would not be understood to approve that everlasting talker,* mentioned in Homer, but that other† described in the following lines:

Frequent and soft, as falls the winter snow,
Thus from his lips the copious periods flow.

Not but I extremely admire him, too,‡ of whom the poet says,

Few were his words, but wonderfully strong.

* Thersites, Iliad ii. v. 212.
† Ulysses, Iliad iii. v. 222. ‡ Menelaus, ibid.

Yet, if I were to choose, I should clearly give the preference to the style resembling *winter snow*, that is, to the full and diffusive; in short, to that pomp of eloquence which seems all heavenly and divine. But (it is replied) the harangue of a more moderate length is most generally admired. It is so, I confess:—but by whom? By the indolent only; and to fix the standard by the laziness and false delicacy of these, would surely be the highest absurdity.—Were you to consult persons of this cast, they would tell you, not only that it is best to say little, but that it is best to say nothing.

Thus, my friend, I have laid before you my sentiments upon this subject, and I shall readily abandon them, if not agreeable to yours. But, should you dissent from me, I beg you would communicate to me your reasons. For, though I ought to yield, in this case, to your more enlightened judgment, yet, in a point of such consequence, I had rather receive my conviction from argument, than authority. If you should be of my opinion in this matter, a line or two in return, intimating your concurrence, will be sufficient to confirm me in the justness of my sentiments: on the contrary, if you should think me mistaken, I beg you to give me your objections at large. Yet, has it not somewhat the air of bribery, to request only a short letter, if you agree with me; but enjoin you the trouble of a very long one, if you should be of a different opinion? Farewell.

LETTER XXI.

TO PATERNUS.

AS I rely very much upon the strength of your judgment, so I do upon the goodness of your eyes: not because I think your discernment very great, (for I would not make you vain,) but, because I think it as good as mine: which, it must be owned, is saying a great deal in its favour. Jesting apart, I like very well the appearance of the slaves which were purchased for me by your recommendation; all that I want farther, is to be satisfied of their behaviour: and, for this, I must depend upon their characters more than their countenances. Farewell.

LETTER XXII.

TO CATILIUS SEVERUS.

I AM, at present, (and have been a considerable time) detained in Rome, under the most alarming apprehensions. Titus Aristo, whom I esteem and love with singular regard, is fallen into a dangerous and obstinate illness, which deeply affects me. Virtue, knowledge, and good sense, shine out with so superior a lustre in this excellent man, that learning herself, and every valuable endowment, seems involved in the danger of his single person. How consummate is his knowledge, both in the political and civil laws of his country! How thoroughly conversant is he in every branch of

history and antiquity ? In a word, there is no article of science, you would wish to be informed of, in which he is not skilled. As for my own part, whenever I would acquaint myself with any abstruse point of literature, I have recourse to him, as to one who supplies me with its most hidden treasures. What an engaging sincerity, what dignity in his conversation ! How humble, yet how graceful his diffidence ! Though he conceives, at once, every point in debate, yet he is as slow to decide, as he is quick to apprehend ; calmly and deliberately weighing every opposite reason that is offered, and tracing it, with a most judicious penetration, from its source through all its remotest consequences. His diet is frugal, his dress plain ; and whenever I enter his chamber, and view him reclined upon his couch, I consider the scene before me, as a true image of ancient simplicity, to which his illustrious mind reflects the noblest ornament. He places no part of his happiness in ostentation, but in the secret approbation of his conscience ; seeking the reward of his virtue, not in the clamorous applauses of the world, but in the silent satisfaction which results from having acted well. In short, you will not easily find his equal, even among our philosophers by profession. He frequents not the places of public disputations,* nor idly amuses himself and others with vain and endless controversies. *His* exalted talents are employed to nobler purposes, and exerted in the scenes of civil and ac-

* The philosophers used to hold their disputations in the Gymnasia and Porticos, being places of the most public resort for walking, &c.

tive life. Many has he assisted with his interest, still more with his advice ! But though he dedicates his time to the affairs of the world, he regulates his conduct by the precepts of philosophy; and, in temperance, piety, justice, and fortitude, he has no superior. It is astonishing with what patience he supports his illness ; how he bears pain, endures thirst, and quietly submits to the pressure of those clothes which are laid upon him to promote perspiration in this raging fever. He lately called me, and a few more of his particular friends, to his bed-side, requesting us to ask his physicians what turn they apprehended his distemper would take; that, if they pronounced it incurable, he might voluntarily put an end to his life ; but if there were hopes of a recovery, how tedious and difficult soever it might prove, he would calmly wait the event ; for so much, he thought, was due to the tears and entreaties of his wife and daughter, and to the affectionate intercession of his friends, as not voluntarily to abandon our hopes, if they were not entirely desperate. A resolution this, in my estimation, truly heroical, and worthy of the highest applause. Instances are frequent in the world, of rushing into the arms of death without reflection, and by a sort of blind impulse ; but deliberately to weigh the reasons for life or death, and to be determined in our choice, as either side of the scale prevails, is the mark of no common greatness of mind.* We have had the satisfaction to re-

* The general lawfulness of self-murder, was a doctrine by no means universally received in the ancient pagan world ; many of the most considerable names, both Greek and Roman, having ex-

ceive the opinion of his physicians in his favour: may heaven give success to their art, and free me from this painful anxiety! If that should happily be the event, I shall immediately retire to my favourite Laurentinum, or, in other words, to my books and my studies. At present, so much of my time and thoughts are employed in attendance upon my friend, and in my apprehensions for his life, that I have neither leisure nor inclination for subjects of literature.

Thus have I informed you of my fears, my wishes, and my intentions. Communicate to me, in return, but in a gayer style, an account not only of what you are and have been doing, but even of your future designs. It will be a very sensible consolation to me in this distress of mind, to be assured that yours is easy. Farewell.

pressly declared against that practice. Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Tully, have condemned it: even Brutus himself, though he fell by his own hands, yet, in his cooler and philosophical hours, wrote a treatise,* wherein he highly condemned Cato, as being guilty of an act both of impiety and cowardice, in destroying himself. The judicious Virgil also adopts the same sentiments, and represents such unhappy persons as in a state of punishment:

Proxima deinde tenent mœsti loca, qui sibi letum
Insontes peperere manu, lucemque perosi
Projecere animas: Quam vellent æthere in alto,
Nunc et pauperiem et duros perferre labores!†

Then crowds succeed, who, prodigal of breath,
Themselves anticipate the doom of death;
Though free from guilt, they cast their lives away,
And sad and sullen hate the golden day.
Oh! with what joy the wretches now would bear
Pain, toil and woe, to breathe the vital air!

* Plut. in Brut. † Æn. vi. 434.

LETTER XXIII.

TO POMPEIUS FALCO.

YOU desire my opinion, whether you can with decency act as an advocate during your tribuneship?* But before I determine that question, I must know what are your sentiments of that office; whether you look upon it as a mere shadow of honour, and an empty title, or as a sacred and inviolable function, the exercise of which as no power can suspend, so neither ought the person himself who is invested with it? when I was myself in that post, (possibly I might be mistaken in supposing I was become of any importance, however, upon the supposition that I really was) I entirely quitted the bar. I thought it unbecoming a magistrate, who, upon all occasions, had a right of precedency, and in whose presence every person is obliged to rise, to be seen standing, while all about him were seated; that he, who has authority to impose silence on any man, should himself be directed when to cease speaking; that he, whom it is held impious to interrupt,† should be exposed to the scurrilous liberties of bar orators; which, to chastise, would be thought a sort of insolence of office, and yet it would be weakness to overlook. I considered, far-

* See Book 9. let. 13. note.

† As their characters were held sacred, it was esteemed the highest act of impiety to offer them any injury, or so much as to interrupt them when they were speaking.

ther, the great difficulty I should be under, if either my client or his adversary should happen to appeal to me as tribune, whether to interpose my authority, or, by a kind of resignation of my office, to act solely in my private capacity. For these reasons, I rather chose to officiate as the public magistrate, than the private advocate. But, with respect to you, (I repeat it again) the whole depends upon what your sentiments are of the office in question, and under what character you would choose to appear; remembering always, that a wise man will take upon himself such only as he is capable of sustaining with dignity.

LETTER XXIV.

TO BEBIUS.

MY friend and guest, Tranquillus, has an inclination to purchase a small farm, of which, as I am informed, an acquaintance of yours intends to dispose. I beg you would endeavour he may obtain it upon reasonable terms; which will add to his satisfaction in the purchase. A dear bargain is always disagreeable, particularly, as it is a reflection upon the buyer's judgment. There are several circumstances attending this little villa, which (supposing my friend has no objection to the price) are extremely suitable to his taste and desires: the convenient distance from Rome, the goodness of the roads, the smallness of the building, and the very few acres of land around it, which are just enough to amuse, but not to employ him. To a man of

the literary turn that Tranquillus is, it is sufficient if he have but a small spot to relieve the mind and divert the eye, where he may saunter round his grounds, traverse his single walk, grow familiar with his two or three vines, and count his little plantations. I mention these particulars, to let you see how much he will be obliged to me, as I shall be to you, if you can help him to this convenient little *box*, at a price which he shall have no occasion to repent. Farewell.

THE LETTERS OF PLINY.

BOOK SECOND.

LETTER I.

TO VOCONIUS ROMANUS.

ROME has not for many years beheld a more magnificent and solemn spectacle, than was lately exhibited in the public funeral of that great man, the illustrious and fortunate* Virginius Rufus. He lived thirty years in the full enjoyment of the highest reputation: and as he had the satisfaction to see his actions celebrated by poets, and recorded by historians, he seems even to have anticipated his fame with posterity. He was thrice raised to the dignity of consul; that he, who† refused to be the

* The ancients seem to have considered fortune as a mark of merit in the person who was thus distinguished. Cicero (to borrow the observation of the excellent Mr. Addison) recommended Pompey to the Romans for their general, upon three accounts, as he was a man of courage, of conduct, and of *good fortune*; and not only Sylla, the dictator, but several of the Roman emperors, as is still to be seen upon their medals, among other titles, gave themselves that of *felix*, or fortunate.

† At the time of the general defection from Nero, Virginius was at the head of a very powerful army in Germany, which had pressed him, and even attempted to force him, to accept the title

first of princes, might, at least, be the highest of subjects. As he escaped the resentment of those emperors to whom his virtues had given umbrage, and even rendered him odious, and ended his days when this best of princes, this friend of mankind,* was in quiet possession of the empire; it seems as if Providence had purposely preserved him to these times, that he might receive the honour of a public funeral. He calmly expired in the 84th year of his age, universally esteemed and revered; and had enjoyed an uninterrupted state of health during his whole life, excepting only a paralytic tremor in his hands, which, however, was attended with no pain. His last sickness, indeed, was severe and tedious;

of emperor. But he constantly refused it; adding, that he would not even suffer it to be given to any person but whom the senate should elect. With this army he marched against Vindex, who had put himself at the head of 100,000 Gauls, and having come up with him, gave him battle, in which Vindex was slain, and his forces entirely defeated. After this victory, when Nero's death was known in the army, the soldiers renewed their application to Virginius to accept the imperial dignity; and though one of the tribunes rushed into his tent, and threatened that he should either *receive the empire, or his sword through his body*, he resolutely persisted in his former sentiments. But as soon as the news of Nero's death was confirmed, and that the senate had declared for Galba, he prevailed with the army, though with much difficulty, to support that prince.—Plutarch, in Galb.

* The justness of this glorious title, *the friend of mankind*, which our author here gives to Nerva, is confirmed by the concurrent testimony of all the historians of these times. That excellent emperor's short reign seems, indeed, to have been one uninterrupted series of generous and benevolent actions; and he used to express the satisfaction he felt of being conscious that he had not committed a single act which could give just offence to any man. Dion, l. 68.

but even that circumstance contributed to render his character the more laudable. As he was preparing to return his public acknowledgments to the emperor, who had raised him to the consulship, a large volume which he accidentally received at that time, too weighty for a feeble old man, slipped out of his hands. In hastily endeavouring to recover it, the pavement being extremely slippery, he fell down and broke his thigh-bone; which fracture, as it was unskilfully set at first, and having, besides, the infirmities of age to contend with, could never be brought to unite again. The funeral obsequies paid to the memory of this great man, have done honour to the emperor, to the present age, and even to eloquence herself. The consul Cornelius Tacitus pronounced his funeral oration: and thus the series of his felicities was completed by the public applause of a most eloquent orator. He died full of years and of glory, as illustrious by the honours he refused as by those he accepted. Still, however, he will be missed and lamented by the world, as the shining model of a better age; especially by myself, who not only admired him as a patriot, but loved him as a friend. We were natives of the same province, and of neighbouring towns, and our estates also were contiguous. Besides these accidental connexions, he was likewise left guardian to me; and indeed, he always treated me with the affection of a parent. Whenever I offered myself a candidate for any employment in the state, he constantly supported me with his interest; and although he had long since renounced all offices of this nature, he would kindly give up the re-

pose of his retirement, and come in person to give me his suffrage. At the season of the year when it is customary for the priests to nominate such as they judge worthy to be received into their sacred office,* he constantly proposed me. Even in his last sickness I received a distinguishing mark of his affection: for, being apprehensive he might be appointed, by the senate, one of the five commissioners to reduce the public expences, he fixed upon me, young as I am, to carry his excuses, in preference to so many other friends of superior age and dignity; and, in a very obliging manner, assured me, that, had he a son of his own, he would, nevertheless, have employed me in that office. Have I not cause then to lament his death, as if it were immature, and thus pour out the fulness of my grief into the bosom of my friend? if, indeed, it be reasonable to grieve upon this occasion, or to esteem that event *death*, which, to *such* a man, is rather to be looked upon as the period of his mortality than the end of his life. He lives, my friend, and will continue to live for ever; and his fame will spread farther, and be more celebrated by mankind, now that he is removed from their sight.——I had many other things to write to you, but my mind is too full of the present subject to turn it to any other. Virginius is constantly in my thoughts: the vain but

* Namely, of augurs. "This college, as regulated by Sylla, consisted of fifteen, who were all persons of the first distinction in Rome: it was a priesthood for life, of a character indelible, which no crime or forfeiture could efface; it was necessary, that every candidate should be nominated to the people by two augurs, who gave a solemn testimony upon oath of his dignity and fitness for that office." Middleton's life of Cic. vi. 529.

lively impressions of him are continually before my eyes, and I am for ever fondly imagining that I hear him, converse with him, and embrace him. We have still, perhaps, some citizens amongst us who may rival him in virtue, and some may hereafter rise; but not one, I am persuaded, that will ever equal him in glory. Farewell.

LETTER II.

TO PAULINUS.

I AM inclined to be angry with you: I am not quite sure I have reason, but angry however I am. Love, you know, is apt to be capricious, is frequently ungovernable, and ever jealous. The occasion of this my wrath is great, you must allow, were it just: yet taking it for granted that it is, I am vehemently angry at your long silence. Would you soften my resentment? Let your letters, for the future, be very frequent, and very long; I shall excuse you upon no other terms: and as absence from Rome, or engagement in business, is a plea I can by no means admit; so that of ill health may the gods avert! As for myself, I am enjoying, at my villa, the alternate pleasures of study and indolence; those happy privileges of uninterrupted leisure! Farewell.

LETTER III.

TO NEPOS.

WE had received very advantageous accounts of Isæus, before his arrival; but he is superior to all that was reported of him. He possesses the utmost facility and copiousness of expression, and his unpremeditated lectures have all the correctness and elegance of the most studied and elaborate composition. He delivers them in the Greek language, or rather the genuine Attic. His exordiums are polite, easy, and harmonious; and, when the subject requires, solemn and majestic. He gives his audience liberty to call for any question they please, and sometimes even to name what side of it he shall take; when immediately he rises up in all the graceful attitude of an orator, and enters at once into the discussion with surprising fluency. His reflections are solid, and clothed in the choicest expressions, which present themselves to him without the least hesitation. The ease and strength of his most unprepared discourses plainly discover that he has been very conversant in the best authors, and much accustomed to compose himself. He opens the topic with great propriety; his style is clear, his reasoning strong, his inferences just, and his figures are both graceful and sublime. In a word, he at once instructs, entertains, and affects you; and he possesses each of those powers in so eminent a degree, that you are at a loss to determine in which he most excels. His arguments

are formed with all the strength and closeness of the strictest logic; a point not very easy to attain even in studied compositions. His memory is so extraordinary, that he will repeat what he has before delivered extempore, without losing a single word. This wonderful faculty he has acquired by great application and practice; for his whole time is so devoted to subjects of this nature, that he thinks and talks of nothing else. Though he is above sixty-three years of age, he still chooses to continue in this profession; than which, it must be owned, none abounds with men of more merit, simplicity, and integrity. We who are conversant in the real contentions of the bar, unavoidably contract a certain petulance, how contrary soever to our natural tempers; but the business of the schools, as it turns merely upon fictitious causes, affords an employment, not only unapt to excite the angry passions, but particularly agreeable to those who are advanced in years, especially as nothing can be more desirable at that period of life, than to enjoy those rational satisfactions which were the most pleasing occupations of our youth. I look, therefore, upon Isæus, not only as the most eloquent, but the most happy of men; as I shall esteem you the most insensible, if you should appear to slight his acquaintance. Let me prevail with you then to come to Rome, if not upon my account, or any other cause, at least, for the pleasure of hearing this extraordinary person. Do you remember to have read of a certain inhabitant of the city of Cadiz, who was so struck with the illustrious character of Livy, that he travelled to Rome on purpose to see that great

genius; and, as soon as he had satisfied his curiosity, returned home? A man must have a very illiberal, and incurious (I had almost said a very insensible) cast of mind, not to think whatever relates to a science, so entertaining, so noble, and so elegant, worthy of his attention. You will tell me, perhaps, you have authors, in your own study, equally eloquent. I allow it; and those authors you may peruse at any time, but you cannot always have an opportunity of being an auditor of Isæus. Besides, we are infinitely more affected with what we hear, than what we read. There is something in the voice, the countenance, the habit,* and the gesture of the speaker, that concur in fixing an impression upon the mind, and give this method of instruction greatly the advantage of any thing one can receive from books. This, at least, was the opinion of Æschines, who, having read to the Rhodians a speech of Demosthenes, which they loudly applauded; "but how," said he, "would you have been

* The ancients thought every thing that concerned an orator, worthy of their attention, even to his very *dress*. Ovid mentions the *habit*, as well as the air and mien of Germanicus, as expressive of his eloquence:

Dum—silens adstat, status est vultusque diserti,
Spemque decens doctæ vocis amictus habet. De Pont. l. 2. 5.

Ere yet he speaks, the orator is seen
In all the eloquence of *garb* and mien.

And the author of the dialogue *de Orat.* 39. goes so far as to assign the use of a certain confined garment then in vogue, among the reasons which gave a check to the ancient spirit of eloquence; as the judicious Quintilian thought it deserving his pains, to lay down very precise rules upon the article of his orator's garments. Vid. Inst. Orat. l. 11. 3.

affected, had you heard the orator himself thundering out this sublime harangue?" Æschines, if we may believe Demosthenes, had great force and dignity of utterance; yet, you see, he could not but confess it would have been a considerable advantage to the oration, if it had been pronounced by the author himself, in all the strength and energy of his powerful elocution. What I aim at by this, is, to persuade you to hear Isæus; if for no other reason, at least, that you may have it to say you once heard him. Farewell.

LETTER IV.

TO CALVINA.

IF your father had left several creditors; or, indeed, a single one except myself; you might justly, perhaps, scruple* to enter upon his estate, which, with such encumbrances, might prove a burthen too heavy even for one of our sex to undertake. But since, out of regard to the affinity that subsisted between us, I was contented to remain the only person unsatisfied, who had any demand upon the estate, while other creditors, I will not say more importunate, but certainly more cautious, were paid off; and as I contributed 100,000 sesterces† towards your marriage portion, over and above the sum your father charged upon this estate for your

* By the ancient Roman law, the heir, if he entered upon the estate, was liable to the debts of the testator or ancestor, even though the estate were not sufficient to pay them.

† About 800l. of our money.

fortune, which may be esteemed my gift too, as it was to be paid out of a fund before appropriated to me. When you consider these instances of my friendship, you can want no stronger pledge that you will find me an easy creditor. In this confidence, you should not scruple to enter upon your inheritance; and, by that means, protect the memory of your father from the reproach dying insolvent. But that I may give you a more substantial encouragement than mere words, I entirely acquit you of the debt he owed me. Do not hesitate to receive this present at my hands, upon the supposition that I can ill spare so large a sum. It is true, my revenue is but moderate; the expences which the dignity of my station requires, are considerable; while the yearly income of my estate, from the nature and circumstance of it, is as uncertain as it is small: yet, what I want in wealth, I make up by œconomy, the surest source that supplies my bounty. I must be cautious, no doubt, not to exhaust it by too much profusion; but it is a caution which I shall observe towards others: with respect to yourself, reason will justify my liberality, though it should overflow its proper bounds. Farewell.

LETTER V.

TO LUPERCUS.

I SEND you, at last, the piece you have so often desired, and which I have as frequently promised, but it is a part only; the remainder I am still polishing. In the mean while, I thought there would

be no impropriety in laying before you such portions as were most correct. I beg you to read it with the same attention that I wrote it; for I never was engaged in any work that required so much. In my former speeches, diligence and integrity only were required; in the present, I had to manifest my patriotism. But, while I dwelt with pleasure upon the honour of my native country, and endeavoured not only to support its rights, but heighten its glory; my oration swelled insensibly. However, I request you to abridge even those favourite topics, wherever you find it necessary; for, when I consider the fastidious delicacy of my readers, I am sensible the surest recommendation I can have to their favour, is by the shortness of the trouble I give them. But at the same time that I abandon my performance to your utmost severity in this instance, I must ask quarter for it in several others. Some consideration ought to be had to the taste of young people, especially where the subject admits of it. In view to this, I have given myself a latitude in describing those places which are frequently mentioned in this performance; and have ventured to treat them not only historically, but poetically. If any austere critic should take offence at this liberty, and think it too florid for the gravity of this sort of composition; the other parts of the oration will, I trust, satisfy his severity, and obtain indulgence for these its gayer colourings. I have, indeed, endeavoured to gain my several readers by adapting my style to their different turns. And though I am afraid there are some passages that will displease particular persons, as not falling

in with their peculiar taste; yet, upon the whole, its variety, I trust, will recommend it in general: as at an elegant entertainment, though we do not, perhaps, taste of every dish, yet we may admire the general disposition of the whole; and, if we happen to meet with some part of the fare which is not to our palate, we are not the less pleased, however, with what is. I am not so vain as to pretend I have actually furnished out such collation; I would be only understood to mean that I have made the attempt: And, perhaps, not altogether without success, if you will exercise your skill upon what I now and shall hereafter send. You will tell me, I know, that you can form no certain judgment till you see the whole. There is some truth in this, I confess! Nevertheless, for the present, you may acquaint yourself with this detached part, wherein you will find some things, perhaps, that will bear a separate examination. If you were to be shown the head, or any other part of a statue, though you could not determine what proportion it bore to the entire figure, yet, you would be able to judge of the elegancy of that particular member. From what other principle is it, that specimens of books are handed about, but that it is supposed the beauties of particular portions may be discerned, without viewing their relation to the whole?—The pleasure I receive in conversing with you has carried me a greater length than I intended. But I stop here; for it is not reasonable that I, who am for setting bounds even to a speech, should set none to a letter.—Farewell.

LETTER VI.

TO AVITUS.

IT would be a long story, and of no great importance, to tell you by what accident I supped lately with a person, with whom I am by no means intimate, and who, in his own opinion, treated us with much splendid frugality; but, according to mine, in a sordid, yet expensive manner. Some very elegant dishes were served up to himself, and a few more of us; while those which were placed before the rest of the company, were extremely cheap and mean. There were, in small bottles, three different sorts of wine; not that the guests might take their choice, but that they might not have an option in their power. The best was for himself and his friends of the first rank; the next for those of a lower order, (for, you must know, he measures out his friendship according to the degrees of quality,) and the third for his own and his guests' freedmen. One who sat near me took notice of this circumstance, and asked me how I approved of it? Not at all, I replied. Pray then, said he, what is your method on such occasions? Mine, I returned, is to give all my visitors an equal reception: for when I make an invitation, it is to entertain, not to *distinguish*, my company; I set every man upon a level with myself whom I admit to my table, not excepting even my freedmen, whom I look upon, at those times, to be my guests, as much as any of the rest. At this he expressed some surprise, and

asked if I did not find it a very expensive method? I assured him, not at all; and that the whole secret lay, in being contented to drink no better wine myself than I gave to others. And, certainly, if a man is wise enough to moderate his own luxury, he will not find it so very chargeable a thing to entertain all his visitors in general, as he does himself. Restrain the delicacy of your own palate within proper bounds, if you would be an œconomist in good earnest: you will find temperance a much better mode of saving expences, than such reproachful distinctions. It were pity a young man of your excellent disposition should be imposed upon by the immoderate luxury which prevails at some tables, under the false notion of frugality; whenever any folly of this nature falls within my observation, I shall, in consequence of that affection I bear you, point it out to you, as an example which you ought to shun. Remember, therefore, nothing is more to be avoided than this modern alliance of luxury with sordidness; qualities extremely odious, when existing in distinct characters, but much more when they meet in the same person.—Farewell.

LETTER VII.

TO MACRINUS.

THE senate decreed yesterday, at the recommendation of the emperor, a triumphal statue to Vestricius Spurinna; not as to many others, who never saw a field of battle, or heard the sound of a trumpet, unless at a show; but, as to one, who,

by his martial virtues, has justly merited that honour. Spurinna, by the power of his arms, restored the king of the Bructeri* to his throne: and this, by a victory, of all others the most noble; for he struck such a terror into that warlike people, that they submitted at the very first view of his troops. But, at the same time that the senate rewarded him as a hero, they considered him as a father; and, to console him for the loss of his son Cottius, who died during his absence upon that expedition, they voted, likewise, a statue to that excellent youth; a very unusual honour for a person of his early years; but the services of the father well deserved, that the pain of so severe a wound should be soothed by no common balm. Indeed Cottius himself gave so remarkable a specimen of the noblest qualities, that it is but reasonable his life, which had so short a period, should be extended, as it were, by this kind of immortality. The purity of his manners, and the dignity of his behaviour, created him such general respect, that he has a just claim to equal those venerable persons in honour, whom he rivalled in virtue; an honour, if I mistake not, conferred not only to perpetuate the memory of the deceased youth, and in consolation to the surviving father, but for the sake of public example. The young men of this age will be hence encouraged to cultivate every worthy principle, when they see such distinguishing rewards bestowed upon one of their own years; at the same time, that men of quality will rejoice in having a numerous issue, while they may expect

* A people of Germany, supposed to have inhabited the country about Rees and Emerick, in the duchy of Cleves.

the satisfaction of leaving a worthy race, if their children should survive them; or so glorious a consolation, if they should survive their children. For the sake of the public, therefore, I am glad that a statue is decreed to Cottius; and so, indeed, I am for my own; for I loved this accomplished youth as ardently, as I now tenderly regret him. It will be a great satisfaction to me to see this figure as I may occasionally pass by, and to stop sometimes to contemplate it. If there is a pleasure in looking upon the pictures of departed friends in our own house, how much more upon those public representations of them, which are not only memorials of their air and countenance, but of their glory and honour. Farewell.

LETTER VIII.

TO CANINIUS.

HOW is my friend employed? Is it in the pleasures of study, or in those of the field? Or does he unite* both, as he well may, on the banks of our favourite Larius?† The fish, in that noble lake, will supply you with sport of that kind; as the surrounding woods will afford you game; while the solemnity of that sequestered scene will, at the same time, dispose your mind to contemplation.

* B. 1. Let. 6. in not.

† Now called Lago di Como, in the Milanese. Comum, the place where Pliny was born, and near to which Caninius had a country house, was situated upon the border of this lake.

Whether you are engaged with some only, or with each of these agreeable amusements, far be it that I should say I envy you; but I must confess, I greatly regret that I also cannot partake of them: a happiness I long for, as earnestly as a man in a fever for drink to allay his thirst, or for baths and fountains to assuage his heat. But if it be not given me to see a conclusion of these unpleasant occupations, shall I never, at least, break loose from them? Never, indeed, I much fear; for new affairs are daily rising, while the former still remain unfinished: such an endless train of business is continually pressing upon me, and riveting my chains still faster! Farewell.

LETTER IX.

TO APOLLINARIS.

I AM extremely anxious for the success of the petition, which Euritius has presented to the senate; and I feel for my friend, what I never felt for myself. My credit and character are, indeed, in some measure, at stake. I obtained for him, of Cæsar, the honour of wearing the *laticlave*,* and also the office of quæstor; as it is by my interest too that he is indulged with the privilege of peti-

* The laticlave was some honourable distinction, peculiar, in the times of the republic, to the senators; but whether a particular sort of garment, or only an ornament upon it, the critics are not agreed. Though the more general opinion is, that it was a broad stripe of purple, sewed upon the fore part of their tunic, and ran round the middle of the breast.

tioning for the tribunate; which, if the senate should refuse him, I am afraid it will be thought I imposed upon the emperor. I must, therefore, in support of my own character, endeavour, that the judgment of the public may confirm the opinion which Cæsar has conceived of him, by my representation. But if I were not, for these reasons, obliged to interest myself in the success of Euritius, yet his probity, good sense, and learning, would incline me to assist him with my utmost power; as, indeed, he and his whole family are deserving of the highest commendation. His father, Euritius Clarus, is a man of strict honour and ancient simplicity of manners; and not only an able, eloquent, and experienced advocate, but defends every cause he undertakes with a courage and integrity, no less to his honour than his singular modesty. Septitius, his uncle, is one of the most plain, open, sincere, and candid men I ever knew. There is a friendly contention amongst them, who shall shew me most affection; which I am persuaded they all equally feel for me. I have now an opportunity of obliging the whole family, in the single person of Euritius: accordingly, I solicit all my friends with the utmost earnestness, apply to them at their own houses, and every place of public resort; in a word, exert my whole power and credit to serve him. I must beg of you, likewise, to take some share of this trouble with me: I will return you the same good office whenever you shall require it, and even without your request. As you have many friends, admirers, and dependents, it

is but shewing yourself a well-wisher to Euritius in this affair, and numbers will be ready to second your inclinations. Farewell.

LETTER X.

TO OCTAVIUS.

YOU are certainly a most obstinate, I had almost said a most cruel man, thus to withhold from the world such excellent compositions! How long do you intend to deny your friends the pleasure, and yourself the glory, of your poetical performances? Suffer them, I entreat you, to come abroad, and to be admired; as admired they undoubtedly will be wherever the Roman language is understood. The public has for some time earnestly expected them; and you ought not to disappoint or mortify its impatience any longer. Some few poems of yours have already, contrary to your inclinations indeed, broke their prison, and escaped to light: These, if you do not collect together, some person or other will claim the agreeable wanderers as their own. Remember, my friend, the mortality of human nature, and that there is nothing so likely to preserve your name as a monument of this kind; all others are as frail and perishable as the men whose memory they pretend to perpetuate. You will say, I suppose, as usual, *Let my friends see to that.* May you find many whose care, fidelity, and erudition, render them able and willing to undertake so considerable a charge! but surely it is not altogether prudent

in any man to expect from others, what he will not do for himself. However, as to the publication, I will press you no farther; be that when you shall think proper. But let me, at least, prevail with you to recite them, that you may be the more disposed to send them abroad, from the very flattering reception which I may venture to assure you they will receive from the assembly. I please myself with imagining the crowd, the admiration, the applause, and even the silence that will attend your recital; for the silence of an audience, when it proceeds from an earnest desire of hearing, is as agreeable to me as the loudest approbation. Do not then, by this unreasonable delicacy, deny yourself any longer the very desirable and certain fruit of your studies: if you should, the world, I fear, will be apt to charge you with idleness and indolence, or, perhaps, with timidity. Farewell.

LETTER XI.

TO ARRIANUS.

YOU take pleasure, I know, in a relation of any thing that is transacted in the senate, worthy of that august assembly: for, though love of ease has led you into retirement, your heart still retains its zeal for the majesty of the commonwealth. Accept then the following account of what lately passed in that venerable body: A transaction for ever memorable by its importance, and not only remarkable by the quality of the person concerned, but useful by the severity of the example.

Marius Priscus, formerly proconsul of Africa, being impeached by that province, instead of entering upon his defence, petitioned that a commission of select judges might be appointed for his trial. Cornelius Tacitus and myself being assigned by the senate counsel for that province, thought it our duty to inform the house, that the crimes alledged against Priscus were of too atrocious a nature to fall within the cognizance of an inferior court: for he was charged with venality in the administration of justice, and even of taking money to pass sentence of death upon persons perfectly innocent. Fronto Catius rose in his behalf, and moved, that the whole enquiry might be confined to the single article of bribery; displaying, upon this occasion, all the force of that pathetic eloquence he is master of, in order to raise the compassion of the senate. The debates grew warm, and the members were much divided in their sentiments. Some were of opinion, that it was a matter which did not legally come under the discussion of the senate; others, that the house was at liberty to proceed upon it, or not, as it should see proper; and that none of his different crimes ought to escape the hand of justice. At last Julius Ferox, the consul elect, a man of great worth and integrity, proposed, that judges should be granted him provisionally, and, in the mean while, that those persons should be proceeded against, to whom it was alledged he had sold innocent blood. Not only the majority of the senate gave into this opinion; but, after all the contention that had been raised, it was generally adopted. I could not but observe,

upon this occasion, that sentiments of compassion, though they at first operate with great force, give way at last to the cool dictates of reason and reflection; and that numbers will support an opinion, by joining in the general voice, which they would never singly and deliberately defend. The fact is, there is no discerning the right side of a question amidst the confused clamours of a crowd; one must consider it apart, if one would view it in its true light. Vitellius Honoratus, and Flavius Martianus, the persons who were ordered to be summoned, were brought before the house. Honoratus was charged with having given three hundred thousand sesterces* to procure a sentence of banishment against a Roman knight, as also the capital conviction of seven of his friends. Against Martianus it was alledged, that he gave seven hundred thousand,† in order to procure another person to be condemned to suffer various tortures; which were accordingly inflicted, and the unhappy man was first whipped, afterwards sent to work in the mines, and at last strangled in prison. But the death of Honoratus prevented the justice of the senate upon him. Martianus, however, appeared, but without Priscus. Tullius Cerealis, therefore, who had been formerly consul, thought proper to move, agreeably to his privilege as a senator, that Priscus might have notice of the business then before the house; whether it was because he thought his being present would raise more compassion, or

* About L.2400 of our money.

† About L. 5600 of our money.

more resentment towards him; or because, as I am inclined to believe, he thought it most equitable, that, as the charge was against them both, so they should both join in the defence, and be acquitted or condemned together. The affair was adjourned to the next meeting of the senate, which proved the most august and solemn I was ever present at. The emperor himself (for he was consul) presided. It happened likewise to be the month of January ;* a season remarkable upon many accounts, and particularly for the great number of senators it always brings together. Not only the importance of the cause, the noise it had made in the world, the expectation that had been raised by the several adjournments, but that innate curiosity in mankind to acquaint themselves with every thing remarkable and uncommon, drew the people from all parts. Figure to yourself the concern and anxiety which we, who were to speak before such an awful assembly, and in the presence of the prince, must have felt! I have often pleaded in the senate; and, indeed, there is no place where I am more favourably heard; yet, as if the scene had been entirely new to me, I found myself under an unusual distress upon this occasion. Besides, there was something in the circumstances of the person accused, which added considerably to the difficulties I laboured under: a man, once of consular dignity, and a member of the sacred college, now stood before me, stripped of all his honours. It

* In this month the several magistrates entered upon their respective offices.

was a painful office, I thought, to accuse one who appeared already condemned; and for whom, therefore, though his crimes were enormous, compassion took its turn, and seemed to plead in his behalf. However, I collected myself enough to begin my speech; and the applause I received was equal to the fears I had suffered. I spoke almost five hours successively, (for they indulged me above an hour beyond the time at first allotted to me,) and what, at my first setting out, had most contributed to raise my apprehensions, proved, in the event, greatly to my advantage. The goodness, the care (I dare not say the solicitude) of the emperor, were so great towards me, that he frequently spoke to one of my attendants, who stood behind me, to desire me to spare myself; imagining I should exert my strength beyond what the weakness of my constitution would admit. Claudinus Marcellius replied in behalf o Martianus; after which, the assembly broke up till the next day; for the evening* coming on, there was not time to proceed farther. The next day, Salvius Liberalis, a very clear, acute, and spirited orator, spoke in defence of Priscus; and he exerted all his talents upon this occasion. C. Tacitus replied to him in a strain of the most powerful eloquence, and with a certain dignity which distin-

* It was not lawful, says one of the commentators, for the senate to assemble before sun-rise, or to continue after sun-set, and quotes Gellius in support of this opinion. But either this custom was not received in Pliny's time, or Gellius must be understood to mean what Mr. Kennet expressly says, that no decree of the senate could pass after sun-set. For that the house actually sat after that time, appears from B. 4. Let. 9. *Dixit in noctem, atque etiam nocte, illatis lucernis.*

guishes all his speeches. Fronto Catius rose a second time in favour of Priscus, and, in a very impressive speech, endeavoured, as indeed the case required, rather to soften the judges, than defend his client. The evening coming on, the senate proceeded no farther that day, but met the next, and entered upon the proofs. It was much to the honour of the senate, and worthy of ancient Rome, thus to be adjourned only by the night, and then re-assemble for three days successively. The excellent Cornutus Tertullus, consul elect, ever firm in the cause of truth, moved, that Marius should pay into the treasury the 700,000 sesterces* he had received, and be banished Italy. Tertullus was for extending the sentence still farther with respect to Martianus, and proposed that he should be banished even from Africa. He concluded, with adding, that Tacitus and I having faithfully and diligently discharged the parts assigned to us, the senate should declare we had executed our trust to their satisfaction. The consuls elect, and those who had already enjoyed that office, agreed with Tertullus, except Pompeius: he moved, that Priscus should pay the seven hundred thousand sesterces into the treasury, but suffer no other punishment than what had been already inflicted upon him for extortion :† as for Martianus, he was for having him banished during five years only. There was a large party for both opin-

* Honoratus being dead, that part of the charge against Marius, which related to his taking three hundred thousand sesterces of him, could not, it seems, be proved.

† A forfeiture of four times the sum received.

ions, and perhaps the majority secretly inclined to the milder sentence; for many of those who appeared at first to agree with Tertullus, seemed afterwards inclined to join with Pompeius; but, upon a division of the house, all those who stood near the consuls, went over to the side of Tertullus. This being observed by the party of Pompeius, they also deserted him in the same manner; so that he was extremely exasperated against those who had urged him to this vote, particularly against Regulus, whom he upbraided for abandoning him in a step which he himself had advised. There is, indeed, such an inconsistency in the general character of Regulus, that he is at once both bold and timorous. Thus ended this important trial; but there remains a considerable part of the business still behind. It is concerning Hostillius Firminus, lieutenant to Marius Priscus, who is strongly charged with being an accomplice; as it appears by the account-books of Martianus, and by a speech which he made in an assembly of the people at Leptis,* that he had exacted fifty thousand denarii† of Martianus; that he was also accessary to the wicked administration of Priscus; and that he received ten thousand sesterces‡ un-

* In Africa.

† About L. 1458 of our money. The Denarius was the chief silver coin among the Romans. Mr. Greaves (who, as Dr. Arbuthnot observes, may be justly reckoned a classical author upon this subject) has valued it at seven-pence three farthings, [Tab. Coins, 1.;] but, to avoid fractions, it is here considered as only equivalent to seven-pence English.

‡ About L. 80 of our money.

der the title of his perfumer; an office perfectly well adapted to this effeminate fop, who is all over essence and perfume. It was agreed, on the motion of Tertullus, to proceed against him the next meeting of the senate; for, either by accident or design, he was at this time absent.

Thus have I given you an account of what is doing in town. Let me know, in return, the news of the country: how your shrubs and your vineyards, your corn and your delicate flocks of sheep, flourish? In a word, if you should not send me a long letter, you must expect, for the future, to be punished in your own way, and to receive none but short ones from me. Farewell.

LETTER XII.

TO THE SAME.

THE remaining part of the enquiry which I mentioned to you in my former letter, concerning the affair of Priscus, is at last, I will not say terminated as it ought; however, it is finished. Firminus being brought before the senate, made such a sort of defence as a man generally does who is conscious of detected guilt. The consuls elect were much divided what sentence to pass: Cornutus Tertullus moved he should be expelled the senate; but Nerva, with more artifice, proposed, that he should be only declared for ever incapable of holding the office of proconsul; and this, as it had the appearance of a milder sentence, prevailed; though, in truth, it is of all others the most severe. For

can any situation be more wretched, than to be obliged to undergo the fatigue of a member of the senate, at the same time that one is cut off from all hopes of enjoying those honours to which a senator is entitled? And, after having received such an ignominy, were it not better to be for ever buried in retirement, than to be marked out by so conspicuous a station to the view and scorn of the world? Besides, to consider this with respect to the public, what can be more unbecoming the dignity of the senate, than to suffer a person to retain his seat in the house, after having been publicly censured by that august assembly? What can be more indecent than for the criminal to be ranked with his judges? For a man, excluded the proconsulship, because he behaved infamously as a lieutenant,* to sit in judgment upon proconsuls? For one proved guilty of extortion, to condemn or acquit others of similar crimes? Yet these reflections, it seems, made no impression upon the majority. Votes go by number, not weight; nor can it be otherwise in assemblies of this kind, where nothing is more unequal than that equality which prevails in them: for, though every member has the same right of suffrage, every member has not the same strength of judgment to direct it.

I have thus discharged the promise I gave you in my last letter, which, by this time, I imagine (unless any accident should have befallen the mes-

* The lieutenant accompanied the proconsul or governor, for the judging of inferior causes, and the management of all smaller concerns; every thing of moment being referred to the immediate care of the governor.

senger) has reached your hands; for I trusted the conveyance to one, of whose diligence and fidelity I am well assured. I hope you will now, on your part, make me as full a return for this and my former, as the scene you are in will afford. Farewell.

LETTER XIII.

TO PRISCUS.

AS I know you gladly embrace every opportunity of obliging me, so there is no man to whom I had rather be obliged. I apply to you, therefore, preferably to any other person, for a favour which I am extremely desirous of obtaining. You, who are commander in chief of a very considerable army, have many opportunities of exercising your generosity; and the length of time you have enjoyed that post, must have enabled you to provide for all your own friends. I hope you will now turn your eyes upon some of mine: they are but a few, indeed, for whom I shall solicit you; though your generous disposition, I know, would be better pleased if the number were greater. But it would ill become me to trouble you with recommending more than one or two: at present, I will only mention Voconius Romanus. His father was of great distinction among the Roman knights; and his father-in-law, or, as I might more properly call him, his second father (for his affectionate treatment of Voconius entitles him to that appellation), was still more conspicuous. His mother was one of the most considerable ladies of Upper Spain; you

know what character the people of that province bear, and how remarkable they are for the strictness of their manners. As for himself, he has been lately admitted into the sacred order of priesthood. Our friendship began with our studies, and we were early united in the closest intimacy. We lived together under the same roof, both in town and country; and he was a party in my most serious and my gayest hours; where, indeed, could I have found a more faithful friend, or more agreeable companion? In his conversation, and even in his very voice and countenance, there is the most amiable sweetness; as at the bar he discovers an elevated genius, an easy and harmonious elocution, a clear and penetrating apprehension. He has so happy a turn for epistolary writing,* that were you

* It appears from this, and some other passages in these letters, that the art of epistolary writing was esteemed by the Romans in the number of liberal and polite accomplishments; and we find Cicero mentioning, with great pleasure, in some of his letters to Atticus, the elegant specimen he had received from his son, of his genius in this way. [Ad Att. l. xv. 16, 17.] It seems, indeed, to have formed part of their education; as, in the opinion of Mr. Locke, it well deserves to have a share in ours. "The writing of letters (as that judicious author observes) enters so much into all the occasions of life, that no gentleman can avoid shewing himself in compositions of this kind. Occurrences will daily force him to make this use of his pen, which lays open his breeding, his sense, and his abilities, to a severer examination than any oral discourse." [Treat. on Educ. 86.] Pliny was of the same opinion; for, in a subsequent letter [B. vii. Let. 9.] wherein he lays down a method of study to one who desired his sentiments upon that head, he particularly recommends to him performances of this kind. It is to be wondered we have so few writers in our own language, who deserve to be pointed out as models upon such an occasion. After having named sir William Temple, it would be difficult, perhaps, to add a second. The elegant writer of Mr. Cowley's Life men-

to read his letters, you would imagine they had been dictated by the Muses themselves. I love him with a more than common affection; and I know he returns it with equal ardour. Even in the earlier part of our lives, I warmly embraced every opportunity of doing him all the good offices which then lay in my power; as I have lately obtained for him of the emperor* the privilege† granted to those who have three children: a privilege

tions him as excelling in this uncommon talent; but as that author declares himself of opinion, "that letters which pass between familiar friends, if they are written as they should be, can scarce ever be fit to see the light," the world is unluckily deprived of what, no doubt, would have been well worth its inspection. A late distinguished genius treats the very attempt as ridiculous, "and professes himself a mortal enemy to what they call a fine letter." His aversion, however, was not so strong, but he knew how to conquer it when he thought proper; and the letter which closes his correspondence with Bishop Atterbury, is, perhaps, the most genteel and manly address that ever was penned to a friend in disgrace. The truth is, a fine letter does not consist in saying fine things, but expressing ordinary ones in an uncommon manner. It is the *proprie communia dicere*, the art of giving grace and elegance to familiar occurrences, that constitutes the merit of this kind of writing. Mr. Gay's letter concerning the two lovers, who were struck dead with the same flash of lightning, is a master-piece of the sort; and the specimen he has there given of his talents for this species of composition, makes it much to be regretted we have not more from the same hand: we might then have equalled, if not excelled, our neighbours, the French, in this, as we have in every other branch of polite literature, and have found a name among our own countrymen to mention with the easy Voiture.

* Trajan.

† By a law passed A. U. 762, it was enacted, that every citizen of Rome, who had three children, should be excused from all troublesome offices where he lived. This privilege the emperors sometimes extended to those who were not legally entitled to it. See Book vii. Let. 16. in not.; and Book 10. Let. 95. in not.

which, though Cæsar very rarely bestows, and always with great caution, yet he conferred, at my request, in such a manner, as to give it the air and grace of being his own choice. The best way of shewing that I think he deserves the obligations he has already received from me, is, by increasing them, especially as he always accepts my services with so much gratitude as to merit farther.

Thus I have given you a faithful account of Romanus, and informed you how thoroughly I have experienced his worth, and how much I love him. Let me entreat you to honour him with your patronage in a way suitable to the generosity of your heart, and the eminence of your station. But, above all, admit him into a share of your affection; for, though you were to confer upon him the utmost you have in your power to bestow, you can give him nothing so valuable as your friendship; and that you may be assured he is worthy of it, even to the highest degree of intimacy, I send you this short sketch of his character. I should continue my intercessions in his behalf, but that I am persuaded you do not require to be importuned, and I have already repeated them in every line of this letter; for, to shew a just reason for what one asks, is to intercede in the strongest manner. Farewell.

LETTER XIV.

TO MAXIMUS.

YOU guessed right: I am much engaged in pleading before the centumviri; but the business

there has more of fatigue than pleasure. The causes are generally of small moment; and it is very seldom that any thing considerable, either from the importance of the question, or the rank of the persons concerned, comes before them. There is another disagreeable circumstance attending it; there are very few lawyers who frequent this court, with whom I can take any sort of satisfaction in being joined. The greater part is composed of a parcel of impudent, obscure young men, who come hither from declaiming in the schools; and behave with so much irreverence and impropriety, that my friend Attilius well observed, "Our youth set out at the bar with centumviral causes, as they do at the academies with Homer;" intimating, that, in both places, they begin where they should end. But, in *former* times, (to use an old man's phrase) it was not customary for the youth, even of the best families, to appear in this court, unless introduced by some person of consular dignity: such was the respect which our ancestors entertained for this noble profession! but now, since every fence of modesty and decorum is broken down, and all distinctions levelled and confounded, the youth of our days are so far from waiting to be introduced, that they rudely rush in uninvited. The audience that follow them are fit attendants upon such orators; a low rout of hired mercenaries, assembling themselves in the middle of the court, where the dole is dealt round to them as openly as if they were in a private dining-room; and at this noble price they run from court to court! The Greeks have a name in their language for this sort of people, importing,

that they are applauders by profession; and we stigmatise them with the opprobrious title of table-flatterers; yet the meanness alluded to, in both languages, increases every day. It was but yesterday, two of my domestic officers,* mere striplings, were hired for this goodly purpose at the price of three denarii†: such is the easy purchase of eloquence! Upon these honourable terms we fill our benches, and gather a circle; and thus it is those vociferous shouts are raised, when a man, who stands in the middle of the ring, gives the word. For you must know, these honest fellows, who understand nothing of what is said, or, if they did, could not hear it, would be at a loss, without a signal, how to time their applause: for those, that do not hear a syllable, are as clamorous in their praises as any of the rest. If, at any time, you should happen to pass by while the court is sitting, and would know the merit of any of our advocates, you have no occasion to give yourself the trouble of listening to them: take it for a rule, he, that has the loudest commendations, deserves them the least. Largius Licinius was the first who gave rise to this custom; but then he went no farther than to solicit an audience. I remember to have heard my tutor, Quinctilian, say, that Domitius Afer, as he was pleading before the centumviri, in his usual grave and solemn manner, heard, on a

* In the original it is *nomenclatores*, a kind of master of the ceremonies, whose business it was to announce the names of the clients and dependents, as he severally introduced them to the patron.

† About one shilling and eleven-pence farthing of our money.

sudden, a most immoderate and unusual noise; being a good deal surprised, he left off: the clamour ceased, and he began again: he was interrupted a second time, and a third. At last, he enquired who it was that was speaking? He was told, Licinius.—"*Alas!*" said he, "*Eloquence in "this court is no more!*" The truth is, it then only began to decline, when, in Afer's opinion, it no longer existed; whereas now it is almost extinct. I am ashamed to say with what an unmanly tone the orators deliver themselves, and with what a squeaking applause they are received; nothing seems wanting to complete this sing-song oratory, but the claps, or rather the music of the stage. The applause of the audience is expressed by a kind of howling, (for I can call it by no other term) which would be indecent even in the theatre. Hitherto, the interest of my friends, and the consideration of my early time of life, have retained me in this court; as it would be thought, I fear, rather to proceed from indolence, than a just indignation at these indecencies, were I yet to leave it: however, I go there less frequently than usual, and am thus making a gradual retreat. Farewell.

LETTER XV.

TO VALERIANUS.

HOW goes on your old estate at Marsi?† and how do you approve of your new purchase?

† One of the ancient divisions of Italy, comprehending part of what is now called the farther Abruzzo.

Has it as many beauties in your eye now, as before you bought it? *That* would be extraordinary, indeed! for an object in possession seldom appears with the same charms it had in pursuit. As for myself, the estate left me by mother uses me but ill; however, I value it for her sake, and am, besides, grown callous by long suffering.—Frequent occasions of complaint render one ashamed of complaining any more.

LETTER XVI.

TO ANNIANUS.

YOU act agreeably to your usual concern for my interest, when you advise me to consider the codicil* of Acillanus (who has appointed me one of his co-heirs) as void, because it is not confirmed by his will. That the law in this case deems it invalid, I well know; and it is a point of jurisprudence to which even those who are ignorant of every other are usually no strangers. But I have a law of my own, which I shall always religiously observe; and that is, punctually to perform the will of the dead, though it may want the essential forms. This codicil, beyond all manner of doubt, is of Acilianus's own hand-writing; therefore,

* A codicil, by the ancient civil law, was a less solemn kind of will; wherein it was not necessary to observe so strictly the ceremonies prescribed by the law for a will. But no legacy given by a codicil was valid, unless confirmed by the will, which was esteemed its basis. This, however, by later emperors, was altered. Vid. Just. Inst. T. 25. l. 2.

though it is not confirmed by his will, I shall be guided by it as strictly as if it were; especially, as there is no danger that any villanous informer can take advantage of this mistake. If, indeed, there were any hazard, that what I give to the legatees in the codicil, would be seized as forfeited to the use of the public, I should, perhaps, act with more deliberation: but as the forfeiture in this case is merely for the benefit of the heir, and he may dispose of what accrues to him as such, in the manner he thinks proper; nothing hinders, since the law does not, my observing that rule which I have laid down to myself. Farewell.

LETTER XVII.

TO GALLUS.

YOU are surprised, it seems, that I am so fond of my Laurentinum,* or (if you like the appel-

* Pliny had no estate round this seat, his whole possessions here being included (as he informs us in B. 4. Let. 6.) in this house and gardens. It was merely a winter villa, in which he used to spend some of the cold months, whenever his business admitted of his absence from Rome; and, for this reason it is, that we find warmth is so much considered in the disposition of the several apartments, &c. And, indeed, he seems to have a principal view to its advantages as a winter house throughout the whole description of it. See Castel's Villas of the Ancients.

Scamozzi, in his *Architect. Univers. l. 3. 12.* has given a plan and elevation of this villa. Mons. Felibien has also annexed a plan to his translation of this letter; as our own countryman, the ingenious Mr. Castel, has done in his *Villas of the Ancients illustrated.* But they differ extremely among themselves as to the disposition of the several parts of this building, and, perhaps, have rather pursued the idea of modern architecture, than that

lation better) my Laurens: but you will cease to wonder, when I acquaint you with the beauty of the villa, the advantages of its situation, and the extensive prospect of the sea-coast. It is but seventeen miles distant from Rome; so that, having finished my affairs in town, I can pass my evenings here, without breaking in upon the business of the day. There are two different roads to it; if you go by that of Laurentum, you must turn off at the fourteenth mile-stone; if by Ostia, at the 11th. Both of them are, in some parts, sandy, which makes it somewhat heavy and tedious, if you travel in a carriage, but easy and pleasant to those who ride on horseback. The landscape, on all sides, is extremely diversified; the prospect, in some places, being confined by woods, in others, extending over large and beautiful meadows, where numberless flocks of sheep and herds of cattle, which the severity of the winter has driven from the mountains, fatten in the vernal warmth of this rich pasturage. My villa is large enough to afford all desirable accommodations, without being extensive. The porch before it is plain, but not mean, through which you enter into a portico in the form of the letter D, which includes a small but agreeable area. This affords a

which is traced out in their original; at least, if the supposition advanced by one of the commentators upon this epistle be true; who contends, that the villas of the ancients were not one uniform pile of building contained under the same roof, but that each apartment formed a distinct and separate member from the rest. The ruins of this villa are said to have been discovered some time about the year 1714, but whether any plan was ever taken of so valuable a remain of antiquity, or the reality of it ascertained, the translator has not been able to learn.

very commodious retreat in bad weather, not only as it is inclosed with windows, but particularly as it is sheltered by an extraordinary projection of the roof. From the middle of this portico you pass into an inward court, extremely pleasant, and from thence into a handsome hall, which runs out towards the sea; so that when there is a south-west wind, it is gently washed with the waves, which spend themselves at the foot of it. On every side of this hall, there are either folding-doors, or windows equally large, by which means you have a view from the front and the two sides, as it were, of three different seas; from the back part, you see the middle court, the portico, and the area; and, by another view, you look through the portico into the porch, from whence the prospect is terminated by the woods and mountains which are seen at a distance. On the left hand of this hall, somewhat farther from the sea, lies a large drawing-room, and beyond that, a second of a smaller size, which has one window to the rising and another to the setting sun: this has, likewise, a prospect of the sea, but being at a greater distance, is less incommoded by it. The angle which the projection of the hall forms with this drawing-room, retains and increases the warmth of the sun; and hither my family retreat in winter to perform their exercises: it is sheltered from all winds, except those which are generally attended with clouds, so that nothing can render this place useless, but what, at the same time, destroys the fair weather. Contiguous to this, is a room forming the segment of a circle, the windows of which

are so placed, as to receive the sun the whole day: in the walls are contrived a sort of cases, which contain a collection of such authors whose works can never be read too often. From hence you pass into a bed-chamber through a passage, which being boarded and suspended, as it were, over a stove which runs underneath, tempers the heat which it receives and conveys to all parts of this room. The remainder of this side of the house is appropriated to the use of my slaves and freedmen; but most of the apartments, however, are neat enough to receive any of my friends. In the opposite wing is a room ornamented in a very elegant taste; next to which lies another room, which, though large for a parlour, makes but a moderate dining-room; it is exceedingly warmed and enlightened, not only by the direct rays of the sun, but by their reflection from the sea. Beyond, is a bed-chamber, together with its ante-chamber, the height of which renders it cool in summer; as its being sheltered on all sides from the winds, makes it warm in winter. To this apartment another of the same sort is joined by one common wall. From thence you enter into the grand and spacious *cooling-room*,* belonging to the bath,† from the opposite walls of

* "The principal use of this room seems to have been designed to prepare the bodies of those that had been in the former room, for their going into the warmer air. *Castel's Villas*, p. 83.

† "The custom of bathing in hot water, was become so habitual to the Romans, in Pliny's time, that they every day practised it before they lay down to eat; for which reason, in the city, the public baths were extremely numerous; in which Vi-

which, two round basons project, sufficiently large to swim in. Contiguous to this is the perfuming-room, then the sweating-room, and next to that, the furnace which conveys the heat to the baths: adjoining, are two other little bathing-rooms, fitted up in an elegant rather than costly manner: annexed to this, is a warm bath of extraordinary workmanship, wherein one may swim, and have a prospect, at the same time, of the sea. Not far from hence, stands the tennis-court, which lies

truvius gives us to understand, there were, for each sex, three rooms for bathing, one of cold water, one of warm, and one still warmer; and there were cells of three degrees of heat for sweating: to the forementioned members, were added others for anointing and bodily exercises. The last thing they did before they entered into the dining-room was to bathe; what preceded their washing was their exercise in the spheristerium, prior to which it was their custom to anoint themselves. As for their sweating-rooms, though they were, doubtless, in all their baths, we do not find them to have been used but upon particular occasions."—*Castel's Villas of the Ancients*, p. 31.

The Roman magnificence seems to have particularly displayed itself in the article of their baths. Seneca, dating one of his epistles from a villa which once belonged to Scipio Africanus, takes occasion, from thence, to draw a parallel between the simplicity of the earlier ages, and the luxury of his own times in that instance. By the idea he gives of the latter, they were works of the highest splendour and expence. The walls were composed of Alexandrine marble, the veins whereof were so artfully managed, as to have the appearance of a regular picture: the edges of the basons were set round with a most valuable kind of stone, found in Thasius, one of the Greek islands, variegated with veins of different colours, interspersed with streaks of gold; the water was conveyed through silver pipes, and fell, by several descents, in beautiful cascades. The floors were inlaid with precious gems, and an intermixture of statues and colonades contributed to throw an air of elegance and grandeur upon the whole. Vide *Sen. Ep.* 86.

open to the warmth of the afternoon sun. From thence you ascend a sort of turret, containing two entire apartments below; as there are the same number above, besides a dining-room which commands a very extensive prospect of the sea, together with the beautiful villas that stand interspersed upon the coast. At the other end, is a second turret, in which is a room that receives the rising and setting sun. Behind this is a large repository, near to which is a gallery of curiosities, and underneath, a spacious dining-room, where the roaring of the sea, even in a storm, is heard but faintly: it looks upon the garden, and the *gestatio** which surrounds the garden. The *gestatio* is encompassed with a box-tree hedge, and where that is decayed, with rosemary: for the box, in those parts which are sheltered by the buildings, preserves its verdure perfectly well; but where, by an open situation, it lies exposed to the spray of the sea, though at a great distance, it entirely withers. Between the garden and this *gestatio* runs a shady plantation of vines, the alley of which is so soft, that you may walk bare-foot upon it without any injury. The garden is chiefly planted with fig and mulberry trees, to which this soil is as favourable, as it is averse from all others. In this place is a banqueting-room, which, though it stands remote from the sea, enjoys a prospect nothing inferior to that view: two apartments run round the back part of it, the windows whereof look upon the entrance of the villa, and into a very pleasant kitchen

* See p. 9. note.

garden. From hence an enclosed portico* extends, which, by its great length, you might suppose erected for the use of the public. It has a range of windows on each side, but on that which looks towards the sea, they are double the number of those next the garden. When the weather is fair and serene, these are all thrown open; but if it blows, those on the side the wind sets are shut, while the others remain unclosed without any inconvenience. Before this portico lies a terrace, perfumed with violets, and warmed by the reflection of the sun from the portico, which, as it retains the rays, so it keeps off the north-east wind; and it is as warm on this side as it is cool on the opposite: in the same manner it proves a defence against the south-west; and thus, in short, by means of its several sides, breaks the force of the winds from what point soever they blow. These are some of its winter advantages: they are still more considerable in summer; for at that season it throws a shade upon the terrace during all the forenoon, as it defends the *gestatio*, and that part of the garden which lies contiguous to it, from the afternoon sun, and casts a greater or less shade, as the day either increases or decreases; but the portico itself is then coolest, when the sun is most scorching, that is, when its rays fall directly upon the roof. To these its benefits I must not forget to add, that, by setting open the windows, the wes-

* "These enclosed porticoes differed no otherwise from our present galleries, than that they had pillars in them: the use of this room was for walking."—*Castel's Villas*, p. 44.

tern breezes have a free draught, and by that means the enclosed air is prevented from stagnating. On the upper end of the terrace and portico stands a detached building in the garden, which I call my *favourite*; and indeed it is particularly so, having erected it myself. It contains a very warm winter-room, one side of which looks upon the terrace, the other has a view of the sea, and both lie exposed to the sun. Through the folding doors you see the opposite chamber, and from the window is a prospect of the enclosed portico. On that side next the sea, and opposite to the middle wall, stands a little elegant recess, which, by means of glass doors and a curtain, is either laid into the adjoining room, or separated from it. It contains a couch and two chairs. As you lie upon this couch, from the feet you have a prospect of the sea; if you look behind, you see the neighbouring villas; and from the head you have a view of the woods: these three views may be seen either distinctly* from so many different windows in the room, or blended together in one confused prospect. Adjoining to this is a bed-chamber, which neither the voice of the servants, the murmuring of the sea, nor even the roaring of a tempest, can reach; not lightning, nor the day itself, can penetrate it, unless you open the windows. This profound tranquillity is occasioned by a passage, which separates the wall of this chamber from that of the garden; and thus,

* "It must have been from the middle of the room that he could see all these prospects separate and distinct, which, upon a "nearer approach to any particular window, must have appeared intermingled."—*Castel's Villas*, p. 38.

by means of that intervening space, every noise is precluded. Annexed to this is a small stove-room, which, by opening a little window, warms the bed-chamber to the degree of heat required. Beyond this lies a chamber and ante-chamber, which enjoys the sun, though obliquely indeed, from the time it rises till the afternoon. When I retire to this garden-apartment, I fancy myself a hundred miles from my own house, and take particular pleasure in it at the feast of the Saturnalia,* when, by the licence of that season of festivity, every other part of my villa resounds with the mirth of my domestics: thus I neither interrupt their diversions, nor they my studies. Among the pleasures and conveniences of this situation, there is one disadvantage, and that is, the want of a running stream; but this defect is, in a great measure, supplied by wells, or rather I should call them fountains, for they rise very near the surface. And indeed the quality of this coast is remarkable; for in what part soever you dig, you meet, upon the first turning up of the ground, with a spring of pure water, not in the least salt, though so near the sea. The neighbouring forests afford an abundant supply of fuel; as every other accommodation of life may be had from Ostia: to a moderate man, indeed, even the next village (between which and my house there is only one villa) would furnish all

* A feast held in honour of the god Saturn, which began on the 19th of December, and continued, as some say, for seven days. It was a time of general rejoicing, particularly among the slaves, who had at this season the privilege of taking great liberties with their masters.

common necessaries. In that little place there are no less than three public baths; which is a great conveniency, if it happen that my friends come in unexpectedly, or make too short a stay to allow time for preparing my own. The whole coast is beautifully diversified by the contiguous or detached villas that are spread upon it, which, whether you view them from the sea or the shore, have the appearance of so many different cities. The strand is sometimes, after a long calm, perfectly smooth, though, in general, by the storms driving the waves upon it, it is rough and uneven. I cannot boast that our sea produces any very extraordinary fish; however, it supplies us with exceeding fine soals and prawns; but as to provisions of other kinds, my villa pretends to excel even inland countries, particularly in milk; for hither the cattle come from the meadows in great numbers, in pursuit of shade and water.

Tell me now, have I not just cause to bestow my time and my affection upon this delightful retreat? Surely you are too fondly attached to the pleasures of the town, if you do not feel an inclination to take a view of this my favourite villa.†

† Mr. Castel observes, "that though Pliny here calls his house *Villula*, it appears that, after having described but part of it, yet, if every Diæta, or entire apartment, may be supposed to contain three rooms, he has taken notice of no less than forty-six; besides all which, there remains near half the house undescribed, which was," as he says, "allotted to the use of the servants; and it is very probable this part was made uniform with that he has already described."—But it must be remembered, that diminutives in Latin do not always imply smallness of size, but are frequently used as words of endearment and approbation; and in this sense it seems most probable that Pliny here uses the word *Villula*.

I much wish, at least, you were so disposed, that, to the many charms with which it abounds, it might have the very considerable addition of your company to recommend it. Farewell.

LETTER XVIII.

TO MAURICUS.

WHAT can be more agreeable to me than the office you have enjoined me, of choosing a proper tutor for your nephews? It gives me an opportunity of revisiting the scene of my education, and of turning back again to the most pleasing part of my life. I resume my seat, as formerly, among the young scholars; and have the pleasure to observe the respect they pay me from the reputation I have acquired by the same studies. Accordingly, when I lately came in upon them, while they were warmly declaiming before a very full audience of the same rank with myself, the moment I appeared they were silent. I mention this for their honour rather than my own; and to let you see the just hopes you may conceive of placing your nephews to their advantage in this seminary. I purpose to hear all the several professors; and then to write you such an account of them as will enable you (as far as a letter can) to judge of their respective abilities. The faithful execution of this important commission, is what I owe to the friendship that subsists between us, and to the memory of your brother. Nothing, certainly, is more your concern, than that his children (I would have said *yours*, but that I

know you now look upon them even with more tenderness than your own) may be found worthy of such a father, and such an uncle; and I should have claimed a part in that care, though you had not required it of me. I am sensible, in thus selecting a preceptor, I shall draw upon me the displeasure of all the rest of that profession: but when the interest of these youths is concerned, I esteem it my duty to hazard the displeasure, or even enmity, of any man, with as much unconcern as a parent would for his own children. Farewell.

LETTER XIX.

TO CEREALIS.

YOU advise me to read my late speech before an assembly of my friends. I will, since it is agreeable to your opinion; though I have many scruples. Compositions of this kind lose, I well know, all their fire and force, and almost even their very name, by a mere recital. It is the solemnity of the tribunal, the concourse of one's friends, the suspense of the event, the emulation between the several orators concerned, the zeal of the different parties formed amongst the audience; in a word, it is the air, the action,* the attitude of the speaker,

* Some of the Roman orators were as much too vehement in their action, as those of our country are too calm and spiritless. In the violence of their elocution, they not only used all the warmth of gesture, but actually walked backwards and forwards. Tully and Quinctilian have laid down rules how far, and in what instance, this liberty was allowable, and both agree it ought to be used with great caution and judgment. The latter of those ex-

together with all the corresponding gestures of his body, that conspire to give a spirit and grace to what he delivers. Hence those who sit when they plead, though they have most of the other advantages I just now mentioned, yet, from that single circumstance, weaken the whole force of their eloquence. The eyes and hands of a reader, those important instruments of graceful elocution, being engaged, it is no wonder the attention of the hearer grows languid, while he has none of those awakening and alluring circumstances to excite it. To these general considerations, I must add this particular disadvantage, which attends the speech in question, that it is chiefly of the argumentative kind; and it is natural for an author to suspect that what he wrote with labour will not be read with pleasure. For who is there so unprejudiced, as not to prefer the flowing and florid to the close and unornamented style? It is very unreasonable there should be any distinction; however, it is certain, the judges generally expect one manner of pleading, and the audience another; whereas, an auditor ought to be affected only with those articles which would strike him, were he in the place of the judge. Nevertheless, it is possible, the objections which lie against this piece may be surmounted, in consideration of the novelty it has to recommend it: the novelty I mean with respect to us; for the Greek orators have a method of reasoning, though upon a different occasion, not altogeth-

cellent critics mentions, upon this occasion, a witticism of Flavius Virginius, who asked one of these walking orators, *Quot millia passuum declamasset?* "How many *miles* he had declaimed!" Quinct. Inst. ed. Oxon. p. 587.

er unlike that which I employed. They, when they would throw out a law, as contrary to some former one unrepealed, argue by comparing those laws together; so I, on the contrary, endeavour to prove, that the crime,* which I was insisting upon as falling within the intent and meaning of the law relating to public extortions, was agreeable, not only to that law, but likewise to other laws of the same nature. Those, who are ignorant of the jurisprudence of their country, can have no taste for reasonings of this kind; but those who are not, ought to be so much the more favourable in the judgment they pass upon them. I shall endeavour, therefore, if you persist in my reciting it, to collect a learned audience. But before you determine this point, I entreat you thoroughly to weigh the difficulties I have laid before you, and then decide as reason shall direct: for it is reason that must justify you; obedience to your commands will be a sufficient apology for me. Farewell.

LETTER XX.

TO CALVISIUS.

"GIVE me a penny, and I will tell you a story worth gold;"† or rather, you shall hear two or

* Some of the commentators are of opinion, (and it is not improbable,) that the speech, mentioned in this letter, is the same which Pliny delivered in the senate against M. Priscus. See Letter xi. of this Book.

† Alluding to the phrase of certain *Charlatans*, who gained their livelihood by gathering a circle round them in the public places of Rome, and amusing the gaping multitude by popular traditionary tales, or wonderful stories of their own invention.

three; for one brings to my mind another. It is no matter which I begin with, so take them as follows:—Verania, the widow of Piso, who was adopted by Galba, lay extremely ill: upon this occasion, Regulus made her a visit. By the way, mark the assurance of the man, to visit a lady to whom he was so extremely odious, and to whose husband he was a declared enemy! Even barely to enter her house, would have been impudent enough; but he had the confidence to go much farther, and very familiarly placed himself by her bed-side. He began very gravely with enquiring, what day and hour she was born? Being informed of these important particulars, he composes his countenance, fixes his eyes, mutters something to himself, counts his fingers, and all this merely to keep the poor sick lady in suspense. When he had finished this ridiculous mummery, "You are," says he, "in one of your climacterics; however, you will get over it. But, for your greater satisfaction, I will consult a certain diviner, whose skill I have frequently experienced." Accordingly, away he goes, performs a sacrifice, and returns with the strongest assurances, that the omens confirmed what he had promised on the part of the stars. Upon this, the credulous good woman calls for her will, and gives Regulus a handsome legacy. Some time afterwards her distemper increased; and, in her last moments, she exclaimed against this infamous wretch, who had thus basely deceived her, though he wished every curse might befal his son,*

* It was customary among the ancients to swear by what they

if what he promised her were not true. But such sort of imprecations are as common with Regulus as they are impious; and he continually devotes that unhappy youth to the curses of those gods, whose vengeance his own frauds every day provoke.

Velleius Blæsus, a person of consular dignity, and remarkable for his immense wealth, had an inclination, in his last sickness, to make some alterations in his will. Regulus, who had lately endeavoured to insinuate himself into his friendship, hoped to receive some advantage by the intended change; and accordingly applied himself to the patient's physicians, and conjured them to exert all their skill to prolong the poor man's life. But the moment the will was signed, his style was changed: "How long," says he to these very physicians, "do you design to keep this man in misery? Since you cannot preserve his life, why will you prolong his death?" Blæsus is since dead; and, as if he had overheard every word that Regulus had said, he has not left him one farthing.—And now have you had enough? or, like a truant school-boy, are you for listening still to another tale? If so, Regulus will supply you. You must know then, that Aurelia, a lady of distinguished accomplish-

held most dear. To this custom (as a late critic justly observes) Martial alludes:

Ecce negas jurasque mihi per templa tonantis;
Non credo: jura, verpe, per Anchialum.

Swear, though thou dost by Jove, thou wilt deceive;
Swear by Anchialus; I'll then believe.

That is, swear by your pathic, your boy Anchialus.

ments, designing to execute her will,* had dressed herself, for that purpose, in a most splendid manner. Regulus, who was present as a witness, turned to the lady, and, "Pray," says he, "leave me these fine clothes." Aurelia, at first, thought him in jest: but he insisted upon it very seriously, and compelled her to open her will, and insert this legacy; and though he saw her write it, yet he would not be satisfied till he read the clause himself. However, Aurelia is still alive; though Regulus, no doubt, when he solicited this bequest, expected soon to enjoy it. Thus are legacies and estates conferred upon this abandoned man, as if he really deserved them! But why should I wonder at this in a city where impudence and iniquity receive the

* This was an act of great ceremony; and if Aurelia's habit was of the kind which some of the Roman ladies used, the legacy must have been considerable which Regulus had the impudence to ask. "The *vestes Byssinæ* (as the ingenious Dr. Arburthnot observes,) which we are told some of the ladies wore, must have been of such an extravagant price, that there is no stuff in our age comes up to it. The very materials of which would be worth 49l. 12s. the pound, avoirdupois weight; and consequently a garment weighing 20 pounds would cost 992l. exclusive of the manufacture." *Arb. of ancient Coins*, &c. p. 146. Now I am upon this head, I cannot forbear mentioning the prodigious extravagance of these ladies in the article of jewels. Pliny the elder says, (Lib. 9. 35.) he saw Lollia Paulina with an equipage of this kind, amounting (according to the above-cited author's calculation) to 322,916l. 13s. 4d. of our money. In one instance of expence, however, the modern ladies seem to exceed the ancient, and though there appears an infinite variety of head-dresses upon busts, statues, and medals, yet it is learnedly debated, among the antiquaries, whether the Roman ladies were so costly in that point as the English. For the credit of the *Tete*, I beg leave to add, that it is of a very ancient original, and is known to have made its appearance among consuls and dictators.

same, do I say, even greater encouragement than modesty and virtue? Regulus is a glaring instance of this truth, who, from a state of indigence, has, by a train of the most villanous actions, acquired such immense riches, that he once told me, upon consulting the omens to know how soon he should be worth sixty millions of sesterces,* he found them so favourable as to portend he should possess double that sum. And possibly he may, if he continue thus to dictate wills for other people; a sort of fraud, in my estimation, of all others the most infamous. Farewell.

* About L. 430,000 of our money.

THE LETTERS OF PLINY.

BOOK THIRD.

LETTER I.

TO CALVISIUS.

I NEVER spent my time more agreeably, I think, than lately with Spurinna. I am so much pleased with the uninterrupted regularity of his way of life, that if ever I should arrive at old age, there is no man whom I would sooner choose for my model. I look upon an orderly arrangement of the affairs of life, especially at that advanced period, with the same sort of pleasure as I behold the settled course of the heavenly bodies. In youth, indeed, there is a certain deviation from precise rule, by no means unbecoming; but in age, when business is unseasonable, and ambition indecent, all should be composed and uniform. This maxim Spurinna religiously pursues throughout his whole conduct. Even in those transactions which one might call minute and inconsiderable, did they not occur every day, he observes a certain periodical season and method. The first part of the morning he devotes to study; at eight he dresses, and walks

about three miles, in which he enjoys, at once, contemplation and exercise. At his return, if he has any friends with him in his house, he enters upon some entertaining and interesting topic of conversation; if he is alone, some book is read to him; and sometimes, too, even when he has visitors, if agreeable to the company. He then reposes himself; and, after this, either takes up a book, or falls into some discourse, even more entertaining and instructive. He afterwards takes the air in his chariot, either with his wife, (who is a lady of uncommon merit) or with some friend; a happiness which lately was mine.—How agreeable, how delightful is the enjoyment of him in that hour of privacy! You would fancy you were hearing some worthy of ancient times, inflaming your breast with the most heroic examples, and instructing your mind with the most exalted precepts, which, yet, he delivers with so modest an air, that it has not the least appearance of dictating. When he has thus taken a tour of about seven miles, he gets out of his chariot, and walks a mile more, after which he returns home, and either reposes himself, or retires to his study. He has an excellent taste for poetry, and composes lyric odes, both in Greek and Latin, with great elegance. It is surprising what a sweet flow of numbers, and what a spirit of gaiety runs through his verses, which the venerable character of the author renders still more pleasing. When the baths are ready, which in winter is about three o'clock, and in summer about two, he undresses himself; and if there happen to be no wind, he walks for some time in the

sun.* After this, he plays a considerable time at tennis; for, by this sort of exercise too, he combats the effects of old age. When he has bathed, he throws himself upon his couch till supper time,† and, in the mean while, some agreeable and entertaining author is read to him. In this, as in all the rest, his friends are at full liberty to partake, or to employ themselves in any other manner more suitable to their inclination. You lie down to an elegant, yet frugal repast, which is served up in antique plate of pure silver. He has, likewise, a complete service in Corinthian metal,‡ which though he admires as a curiosity, is far from being his passion. At his table, he is frequently entertained with the recital of some dramatic piece, so that even his very meals are a feast to the understanding; and though he continues at supper, even in summer, till the night is somewhat advanced, yet he prolongs the repast with so much affability and

* See Book vi. let. 16. note.

† This was the principal meal among the Romans, at which all their feasts and invitations were made; they usually began it about their 9th hour, answering pretty nearly to our three o'clock in the afternoon. But as Spurinna, we find, did not enter upon the exercises which always preceded this meal, till the eighth or ninth hour, if we allow about three hours for that purpose, he could not lie down to table till toward six or seven o'clock. See Let. 5. of this Book, in note, p. 127.

‡ This metal, whatever it was composed of (for that point is by no means clear,) was so highly esteemed among the ancients, that they preferred it even to gold:

Æraque ab Isthmiacis auro potiora favillis.

Stat. Sylv. 2.

Corinthian brass, more precious far than gold.

politeness, that none of his guests ever think it tedious. By this method of living, he has preserved all his senses entire, and his body active and vigorous, to his 78th year, without discovering any symptoms of old age, but the wisdom. This is the sort of life which I ardently aspire after; and I purpose to enjoy it, when I shall arrive at those years which will justify a retreat from active occupations. In the mean while, I am embarrassed with a thousand affairs, in which Spurinna is, at once, my support and my example: for he, likewise, as long as it became him, entered into all the duties of public life. It was by passing through the various offices of the state, by governing provinces, and by indefatigable labours, that he merited the repose he now enjoys. I propose to myself the same course, and the same limits; and I here give it to you under my hand, that I do so. If an ill-timed ambition should carry me beyond those bounds, produce this letter against me; and condemn me to repose, whenever I may enjoy it without being reproached with indolence. Farewell.

LETTER II.

TO MAXIMUS.

I THINK I may claim a right to ask the same services of you for my friends, as I would offer to yours if I had the same opportunity. Arianus Maturius is a person of great eminence among the Altinates.* When I say this, it is not with respect

* Altino, in the Venetian territories, now destroyed.

to his fortunes, (which, however, are very considerable;) it is in allusion to the purity, the integrity, the prudence, and the sanctity of his manners. His counsel guides me in my affairs, and his judgment in my studies; for truth, honour, and knowledge, are the distinguishing qualities which mark his character. He loves me (and I cannot express his affection in stronger terms) with a tenderness equal to yours. As he is a stranger to the passion of ambition, he is contented with remaining in the equestrian order, when he might easily have advanced himself into a higher rank. It behoves me, however, to endeavour that his merit be rewarded as it deserves; and I would fain, without his knowledge or expectation, and probably too contrary to his inclination, contribute to his honours. The post I wish to obtain for him is some station of great dignity, and yet attended with no trouble. I beg, when any thing of that nature offers, you would think of him: it will be an obligation, which he and I shall ever remember with the greatest gratitude. For, though he has no aspiring views to gratify, he will be as sensible of the favour, as if he had received it in consequence of his own desires. Farewell.

LETTER III.

TO HISPULIA.

IT is not easy to determine, whether my love or esteem were greater, for that wise and excellent man, your father; but this is most certain, that,

part of the Bætici arrived with complaints of some grievances they had suffered under the government of Cecilius Classicus; and applied to the senate, that I might be appointed counsel for them. My very worthy and obliging colleagues represented, on my behalf, the necessary engagements of our office, and endeavoured to get me excused. Upon this, the senate passed a decree greatly to my honour: they ordered, that I should be counsel for the province, provided the deputies could obtain my consent. At my return, they were again introduced into the senate, and there renewed their petition in my presence. They conjured me, by that generous assistance I had given them in their cause against Bæbius, and by all the obligations I lay under of supporting my avowed clients, that I would not now desert them. I perceived the senate was inclined to grant this petition, by that general assent which is the usual forerunner of all their decrees. Whereupon I rose, and told the house, that I no longer insisted upon the reasonableness of the excuse I had alledged: and they seemed pleased with the respectful modesty of my answer. I was determined in this resolution, not only because I found it agreeable to the inclinations of the senate (which indeed had great weight with me,) but for many other, though less important, considerations. I reflected, that our ancestors thought themselves obliged to engage voluntarily in defence of those particular persons, with whom they were united by the laws of hospitality;* and that,

* The observation of Eustathius upon the interview of Glaucus and Diomed, in the sixth Iliad, as translated by Mr. Pope, in his

therefore, it would be highly ungenerous to abandon a collective body, to whom I stood in the same relation. Besides, I considered the danger, as well as the fatigue, I went through in the last cause I undertook for this province; and I was unwilling to lose the merit of my former services, by denying their request in the present instance. For such is the disposition of mankind, that the favour you refuse, cancels all you have conferred; and though you oblige them ever so often, they will forget a thousand compliances, and yet remember a single denial. I considered, likewise, that, Classicus being dead, the great objection of exposing a senator was removed; and that, in undertaking this cause, I should merit the same thanks from my clients, as if he were alive, without the hazard of giving offence to any particular person. In a word, I thought, if I complied with their desires on this occasion, I could, with a better grace, deny my assistance to them in any future, where I might have reasons for declining to be their advocate. For all our offices have their limits; and the best way of reserving to ourselves the liberty of refusing where

notes upon that place, will throw a light upon this passage, which may be of service to the English reader. "The laws of hospitality," says he, "were anciently held in great veneration. The friendship contracted thereby was so sacred, that they preferred it to all the bonds of consanguinity and alliance, and accounted it obligatory to the third and fourth generation. We see Diomed and Glaucus agreeing not to be enemies during the whole course of a war, only because their grandfathers had been mutual guests.—They preserved in their familes the presents which had been made on these occasions; as obliged to transmit to their children the memorials of their right of hospitality."

we would, is to comply where we can. Thus, you have heard the motives which influenced me in this transaction: it now remains that you give me your opinion, which I shall receive with equal satisfaction, either as an instance of your sincerity, or a sanction to my conduct. Farewell.

LETTER V.

TO MACER.

I HAVE the pleasure to find you are so great an admirer of my uncle's works, as to wish to have a complete collection of them; and, for that purpose, desire me to send you an account of all the treatises he wrote. I will point them out to you in the order in which they were composed; for, however immaterial *that* may seem, it is a sort of information not at all unacceptable to men of letters. The first book he published, was a treatise concerning *The Art of using the Javelin on Horseback:* This he wrote when he commanded a troop of horse; and it is drawn up with great accuracy and judgment. *The Life of Pomponius Secundus, in two volumes:* Pomponius had a very great affection for him, and he thought he owed this tribute to his memory. *The History of the Wars in Germany, consisting of twenty books:* In which he gives an account of all the battles we were engaged in against that nation. A dream, which he had, when he served in the army in Germany, first suggested to him the design of this work. He imagined, that Drusus Nero (who extended his conquests very far into that

country, and there lost his life) appeared to him in his sleep, and conjured him not to suffer his memory to be buried in oblivion. He has left us likewise *A Treatise upon Eloquence*, divided into six volumes. In this work, he takes the orator from his cradle, and leads him on till he has carried him up to the highest point of perfection in this art. In the latter part of Nero's reign, when the tyranny of the times made it dangerous to engage in studies of a more free and elevated spirit, he published a piece of criticism in eight books, concerning *Ambiguity in Expression*. He has completed the history which Aufidius Bassus left unfinished, and has added to it thirty books. And, lastly, he has left thirty-seven books upon the subject of *Natural History*: This is a work of great compass and learning, and almost as full of variety as nature herself. You will wonder how a man, so engaged as he was, could find time to compose such a number of books; and some of them too upon abstruse subjects. But your surprise will rise still higher, when you hear, that, for some time, he engaged in the profession of an advocate; that he died in his fifty-sixth year; that, from the time of his quitting the bar, to his death, he was employed partly in the execution of the highest posts, and partly in a personal attendance on those emperors who honoured him with their friendship. But he had a quick apprehension, joined to unwearied application. In summer, he always began his studies as soon as it was night;*

* The distribution of time, among the Romans, was extremely different from the method in use amongst us. They measured the night into four equal parts, which they called *watches*, each

in winter, generally at one in the morning, but never later than two, and often at midnight. No man ever spent less time in bed; insomuch, that he would sometimes, without retiring from his book, take a short sleep, and then pursue his studies. Before day-break, he used to wait upon Vespasian, who likewise chose that season to transact business. When he had finished the affairs which that emperor committed to his charge, he returned home again to his studies. After a short and light repast at noon (agreeably to the good old custom of our ancestors,) he would frequently, in the summer, if disengaged from business, repose himself in the sun; during which time some author was read to him, from whence he made extracts and observations; as indeed this was his constant method whatever book he read; for it was a maxim of his, that, "no book was so bad, but something might be learnt from it." When this was over, he generally went into the cold bath, and as soon as he came out of it, just took a slight refreshment, and then reposed himself for a little while. Thus, as if it had been a new day, he immediately resumed his

containing the space of three hours; and part of these they devoted either to the pleasures of the table, or to study. The natural day they divided into twelve hours, the first beginning with sun-rise, and the last ending with sun-set; by which means their hours were of unequal length, varying according to the different seasons of the year. The time for business began with sun-rise, and continued to the fifth hour, being that of dinner, which, with them, was only a slight repast. From thence to the seventh hour was a time of repose; a custom which still prevails in Italy. The eighth hour was employed in bodily exercises; after which they constantly bathed, and from thence went to supper.

studies till supper-time, when a book was again read to him, upon which he would make some hasty remarks. I remember once, his reader having pronounced a word wrong, somebody at the table made him repeat it again; upon which my uncle asked his friend if he understood it? Who acknowledging that he did: "Why then," said he, "would you make him go back again? We have lost, by this interruption, above ten lines:" so covetous was this great man of time! In summer, he always rose from supper by day-light; and, in winter, as soon as it was dark: and he observed this rule as strictly as if it had been a law of the state. Such was his manner of life amidst the noise and hurry of the town: but in the country his whole time was devoted to study, without intermission, excepting only when he bathed. In this exception, I include no more than the time he was actually in the bath; for, while he was rubbed and wiped, he was employed either in hearing some book read to him, or in dictating. In his journies, he lost no time from his studies, but his mind, at those seasons, being disengaged from all other business, applied itself wholly to that single pursuit. A secretary* constantly attended him in his chariot, who, in the

* The word, in the original, implies a person who wrote short hand; an art which the Romans carried to its highest perfection, as appears from the following epigram:

Currant verba licet, manus est velocius illis;
Nondum lingua suum, dextra peregit opus.

Mart. 14, 208.

Swift though the words, the pen still swifter sped;
The hand has finished, ere the tongue has said.

winter, wore a particular sort of warm gloves, that the sharpness of the weather might not occasion any interruption to my uncle's studies; and, for the same reason, when in Rome, he was always carried in a chair. I remember he once reproved me for walking: "You might," said he, "employ those hours to more advantage:" for he thought every hour lost that was not given to study. By this extraordinary application, he found time to compose the several treatises I have mentioned, besides one hundred and sixty volumes which he left me by his will, consisting of a kind of common-place, written on both sides, in a very small character; so that one might fairly reckon the number considerably more. I have heard him say, that when he was comptroller of the revenue in Spain, Largius Licinius offered him four hundred thousand sesterces* for these manuscripts; and yet they were not then quite so numerous. When you reflect upon the books he has read, and the volumes he has written, are you not inclined to suspect, that he never was engaged in the affairs of the public, or the service of his prince? On the other hand, when you are informed how indefatigable he was in his studies, are you not disposed to wonder, that he read and wrote no more? For, on one side, what obstacles would not the business of a court throw in his way? And, on the other, what is it that such intense application might not perform? I cannot but smile, therefore, when I hear myself called a studious man, who, in comparison to him, am an

* About L. 3200 of our money.

arrant loiterer. But why do I mention myself, who am diverted from these pursuits, by numberless affairs, both public and private? Even they, whose lives are devoted to study, must blush to appear as mere idlers, when compared with him. I have run out my letter, I perceive, beyond the extent I at first designed, which was only to inform you, as you desired, what treatises he has left behind him. But I trust this will not be less acceptable to you than the books themselves, as it may, possibly, not only raise your curiosity to read his works, but your emulation to copy his example, by some attempts of the same nature. Farewell.

LETTER VI.

TO SEVERUS.

I HAVE lately purchased, with a legacy that was left me, a statue of Corinthian brass. It is small, indeed, but well executed, at least, if I have any judgment; which, most certainly in matters of this sort, as perhaps in all others, is extremely defective. However, I think I have a taste to discover the beauties of this figure: as it is naked, the faults, if there be any, as well as the perfections, are more observable. It represents an old man in an erect attitude. The bones, the muscles, the veins, and wrinkles, are so strongly expressed, that you would imagine the figure to be animated. The character is well preserved throughout every part of the body: the hair is thin, the forehead broad, the face shrivelled, the throat lank,

the arms languid, the breast fallen, and the belly sunk; as the whole turn and air of the figure behind is expressive of old age. It appears to be antique, from the colour of the brass. In short, it is a performance so highly finished, as to merit the attention of the most curious, and to afford, at the same time, pleasure to the most common observer: and this induced me, who am an absolute novice in this art, to buy it. But I did so, not with any intent of placing it in my own house, (for I have nothing of that kind there) but with a design of fixing it in some conspicuous place in my native province, perhaps in the temple of Jupiter: for it is a present well worthy of a temple and a god. I desire, therefore, you would, with that care with which you always execute my requests, give immediate orders for a pedestal to be made for it. I leave the choice of the marble to you, but let my name be engraven upon it, and, if you think proper, my titles. I will send the statue by the first opportunity; or, possibly, (which, I am sure, you will like better) I may bring it myself: for I intend, if I can find leisure, to make an excursion to you. This is a piece of news which, I know, you will rejoice to hear; but you will soon change your countenance, when I tell you my visit will be only for a few days; for the same business, that now detains me here, will prevent my making a longer stay. Farewell.

LETTER VII.

TO CANINUS.

I AM just now informed, that Silius Italicus has starved himself to death, at his villa near Naples. Having been afflicted with a cancerous humour, which was deemed incurable, he grew weary of life, under such painful circumstances, and therefore put an end to it, with the most determined courage. He had been extremely fortunate through the whole course of his days, excepting only the death of his youngest son; however, that loss was made up to him, in the satisfaction of seeing his eldest, who is of a more amiable character, attain the consular dignity, and of leaving him in a very flourishing situation. He suffered in his character during the time of Nero, having been suspected of being willingly concerned in some of the informations which were carried on in the reign of that prince; but he made use of his interest with Vitellius, with great discretion and humanity. He acquired much honour by his administration of the government of Asia; and by his approved conduct, after his retirement from public business, cleared his character from that stain which his former intrigues had thrown upon it. He lived as a private nobleman, without power, and consequently without envy. Though he was frequently confined to his bed, and always to his chamber, yet he was highly respected, and much visited; not with an interested view, but merely on account of his

merit. He employed his time between conversing with men of letters, and composing verses; which he sometimes recited, in order to try the opinion of the public: but he discovered in them more industry than genius. In the decline of his years, he entirely quitted Rome, and lived altogether in Campania, from whence even the accession of the new emperor* could not draw him: a circumstance which I mention as well to the honour of the prince, who was not displeased with his taking that liberty, as of Italicus, who was not afraid to make use of it. He was reproached with indulging his taste for the fine arts at an immoderate expence. He had several villas in the same province; and the last purchase was always the chief favourite, to the neglect of all the rest. They were furnished with large collections of books, statues, and pictures, which he more than enjoyed, he even adored; particularly the statue of Virgil, of whom he was so passionate an admirer, that he celebrated the anniversary of that poet's birth-day with more solemnity than his own; especially at Naples, where he used to approach his tomb† with as much veneration as if it had been a temple. In this state

* Trajan.

† Travellers are still shown a monument near Naples, which is called Virgil's tomb. But Mr. Addison "thinks it almost certain, that this tomb stood on the other side of the town, which looks towards mount Vesuvio." Addison's Travels, p. 164.—Mabillon, in his *Mus. Ital.* p. 112, says, the following epitaph was dug up there:

Sistite viatores quæso, pauca legite:
Hic situs est Maro!

Stay, travellers, I beg, and read this short inscription:
Here lies Maro!

of tranquillity he lived to the seventy-fifth year of his age, with a delicate rather than infirm constitution: As he was the last person upon whom Nero conferred the consular office (that prince being killed during his consulship,) so he was the last also that survived of all those who had been raised by him to that dignity. When I consider this circumstance, I cannot forbear lamenting the transitory condition of mankind. Is there any thing in nature so short and limited as human life, even in its most extended period? Does it not seem to you but yesterday that Nero existed? And yet not one of all those who were consuls in his reign now remains! But why should I wonder at an event so common? Lucius Piso (the father of that Piso, who was infamously assassinated by Valerius Festus in Africa) used to say, he did not see one person in the senate,* who sat in that house when he was consul: such multitudes are swept away in so short a space! I am, therefore, so far from thinking those remarkable tears of Xerxes need any apology, that, in my judgment, history does honour to his character, which informs us, that, when this prince had attentively surveyed his immense army, he could not forbear weeping, from the reflection, that so many thousand lives would so soon be extinct. The more ardent, therefore, should our endeavours be to lengthen out this short portion of existence, if not by achievements of glory (for occasions of that kind are not in our power,) yet, however, by those of literary honour; and since it is not granted us to live long,

* The number of senators, as regulated by Augustus, was 600.

let us transmit to posterity some memorial, that we have at least LIVED. I well know, you want not my excitement; but the warmth of my affection inclines me to instigate you in the course you are actually pursuing; as I have often been encouraged to proceed in mine by your exhortations. Happy contention, when two friends thus strive, who shall animate each other most in their mutual pursuits of immortal fame! Farewell.

LETTER VIII.

TO TRANQUILLUS.

THE obliging manner in which you desire me to confer the military tribunate* upon your relation, which I had obtained of the most illustrious† Neratius Marcellus for yourself, is agreeable to that respect with which you always treat me. As it would have given me great pleasure to have seen you in that post, so it will not be less acceptable to me to have it bestowed upon the person you recommend: for hardly, I think, would it be consistent to wish the advancement of a friend's honours, and yet envy him the noblest of all distinctions, that of a generous and an affectionate relation. To deserve preferment, and to bestow it, is a glorious character: and it will be yours, if you resign to your friend what is due to your own merit. Of this glory I too shall partake; when the world

* See Book 4. Let. 4. note.

† This was a title given to all senators, in the times of the latter emperors.

shall know, by the present instance, that my friends are not only raised to the tribuneship, but have the power also to confer it. I readily, therefore, comply with your generous request; and, as your name is not yet entered upon the roll, I can, without difficulty, insert that of Silvanus in its stead. May he accept this good office at your hands with the same graceful disposition, as I am sure you will receive it from mine! Farewell.

LETTER IX.

TO MINUTIANUS.

I AM now at leisure to inform you of the great fatigue I underwent in defence of the province of Bætica: a cause which turned upon a variety of questions, and took up several days in hearing. Cæcilius Classicus was governor of Bætica, the year that Marius Priscus administered the same office in Africa. Cæcilius was a man of a base, abandoned character, and had exercised his authority with great violence and oppression. He was a native of Africa, as Priscus was of Bætica; in allusion to which, the latter people used archly to say, (for a strong sense of injuries often gives a certain poignancy to the expression of one's feelings) *we are paid in our own coin.** The only difference

* This seem to be one of those passages to which it is impossible, not only for a translator to do justice, but perhaps, even for the most skilful in the original language to enter into its true spirit. The expression, in its primary sense, implies no more than this: "I have received a wound, and returned it;" (*Dedi malum et accepi;*)

between them was, that Marius was prosecuted on the part of a single city, as also by several private persons; whereas, the charge against Classicus was brought in the name of the whole united province of Bætica. He escaped, however, the consequences of this impeachment, either by an accidental or voluntary death, I know not which. It is certain, at least, the world imputed to him the disgrace of the latter; though I must confess that point is to me extremely doubtful. For as, on the one hand, it is reasonable to suppose, that any man would rather choose to die than be arraigned on a charge from which he could not clear himself; so, on the other, it is surprising, that he, who was not ashamed to commit the crimes of which he was accused, should yet prefer death to the disgrace of a public conviction. Nevertheless, the Bætici persisted in going on with the prosecution against him. This privilege, which the laws admit, was now, after

in which there does not appear even the faintest shadow of wit or raillery. An instance of the same kind occurs in Book 4. Let. 11. where our author commends a sarcasm of Valerius Licinianus, as the most severe and spirited imaginable, though there seems to be little in it to deserve that character. In both cases, it is highly probable, that the force of the raillery consisted either in some allusion, which we cannot discover at this distance; or the words themselves, perhaps, might, by some double meaning, carry a sense when they were spoken, which is now lost. Nor is it to be wondered we should be under a difficulty of this kind, when the Romans themselves, as Quinctilian informs us, were, even in his time, at a loss to discover the true humour of several of Cicero's occasional *Bons Mots*, in that collection of them which were then extant; and that penetrating critic assures us, that though many had endeavoured to clear up and explain the force and propriety of them, the attempt had always proved unsuccessful. *Quinct.* l. 6. c. 3.

long disuse, revived. They went farther, and insisted, that his accomplices should likewise be proceeded against at the same time. I was counsel for the province, together with Lucceius Albinus. He is a copious and elegant speaker; and though I always loved the man, yet the being joined with him in this cause, has considerably heightened my affection. There is something in the pursuit of fame, especially of the oratorical kind, that is selfish, unsociable, and jealous of participation; but there was no rivalship between us, and we united our common efforts in this trial, without being mutually excited by any envious contention to display superior talents. We thought the point in question was of too much importance, and of too complicated a nature, for each of us to be limited to a single speech; being apprehensive we should neither have strength, nor time, to make good our charge against so many parties, if we comprised them all under one general accusation. Such a variety of persons and facts would be apt to confound, as well as weary, the attention of the judges. Besides, in that collective way of proceeding, either the interest of some might prove a protection to all the rest; or, the most inconsiderable of the party might be sacrificed to the justice of their country, in order to favour the escape of those of a more conspicuous rank: for partiality never exerts itself with more success, than when it is concealed under the specious appearance of severity. We remembered the advice of Sertorius, who directed the strongest soldier to tear off the horse's tail at once, and the weakest to pull it off hair by

hair.—But you know the story*. In the same manner, we thought we had no other way to cope with such a numerous body of criminals, but by attacking them singly. Our first and principal point was to prove Classicus guilty, which would prepare the way to his accomplices; for, till that was done, it would not be possible to fix any charge upon the latter. Amongst these, we singled out Bæbius Probus, and Fabius Hispanus, whom we thought it advisable to arraign immediately after Classicus; these persons being considerable, by their interest, and Hispanus, in particular, by his eloquence. There was no difficulty in proving the allegations against Classicus; for there was found among his memorandums, an account, under his own hand, of the several sums he had taken, and upon what occasions. A letter was also produced, which he sent to a certain favourite mistress of his at Rome, wherein he expresses himself in these words: "Rejoice with me, for I am preparing to

* The story, as related by Valerius Maximus, is to this purpose: Sertorius being proscribed by Sylla, put himself at the head of the Lusitani. These people, upon a certain occasion, were for attacking, at once, the whole Roman army, greatly superior to them in numbers. Sertorius endeavoured to dissuade them, by all the arguments in his power, from so rash a purpose; but finding his oratory prevailed nothing, he ordered two horses to be brought before him, and calling a young lusty soldier, and worn out veteran, he directed the former to pull off the horse's tail at once, and the other by degrees. The consequence was, the young man exerted all his strength in vain, while the old fellow performed his task. Thus, says that author, these rude, ungovernable people, who were running headlong to their destruction, were convinced, by this visible representation, of the justness of that advice, which had no influence upon them in the way of reasoning. *Val. Max.* l. 7. c. 6.

return to you; and, in such a manner, as to have nothing to fear from my creditors, having raised four millions of sesterces* upon the Bætici." But it cost us much time and pains to make good the articles against Hispanus and Probus. Before I entered upon the particular accusations against these, I thought it necessary to prove, that, to be the agents and ministers of a governor, in matters manifestly unjust, was, in itself, criminal. For, they did not attempt to deny the fact, but pleaded, in excuse, that they were officers under Classicus, and therefore obliged to obey his orders. Claudius Restitutus, who was counsel on their side, has often assured me, he never was more perplexed and disconcerted than when he perceived I had seized this post, in which he had placed all his strength and confidence; though no man is more expert and vigilant in his profession, or more prepared against a surprise. The senate decreed, that an account should be taken of the effects Classicus possessed before he went to his government; that these should be given to his daughter; and directed the overplus to be divided among the unhappy sufferers. The decree added, that his creditors should refund whatever monies they had received since his return. Hispanus and Probus were sentenced to be banished for five years: so very atrocious did that conduct now appear, which seemed, at first, to be doubted, whether it was criminal or not. A few days afterwards we proceeded against Clavius Fuscus, who married the daughter of Clas-

* About L. 32,000 of our money.

sicus, and Stillonius Priscus, who commanded a regiment under him; but the respective events were very different: for the former was acquitted, and the latter banished Italy for two years. At the third hearing, we thought it expedient to join several accomplices in one general charge, lest, by protracting this affair any longer, the patience of even the judges themselves would be quite worn out and exhausted by fatigue. We had, indeed, designedly reserved the most inconsiderable of the persons concerned to this day, the wife of Classicus only excepted, against whom, though there was strong suspicion, the proofs were by no means thought clear: as to his daughter, who was likewise in the number of the accused, there was not the least ground for any charge against her. When therefore, in the close of the pleadings, I was to take notice of the latter, I thought it would ill become me to bear head upon one who appeared to be innocent; and therefore I spoke very fully and freely in her vindication. Indeed, as this impeachment was now drawing to a conclusion, there was no danger that this last circumstance would take off from the weight of the accusation against her father, as it might, if I had defended her in the outset of the cause. I addressed myself to the deputies, and desired they would tell me if they had any thing to alledge against her, which they thought they could prove; and appealed to the senate, whether I ought to employ my talents, if, in truth, I had any, to the destruction of an innocent person: and I concluded with saying, "But, perhaps, I shall be asked, if I take upon myself to act as a

judge? By no means: I consider myself, however, as an advocate chosen from amidst that venerable body."

Thus ended this prosecution, in which so many parties were involved; some of whom were acquitted, but the greater number condemned, either to perpetual banishment, or for a limited time. The senate were pleased, in the same decree, to honour us with a most ample testimony of our diligence, fidelity, and resolute perseverance in the conduct of this important business: the only reward we could have received equal to the very laborious office we had sustained. You will easily conceive the fatigue we underwent in speaking and debating so long and so often, and in interrogating, assisting, or confuting such a number of witnesses; as well as what a difficult and disagreeable task we had, to withstand the private solicitations, and public opposition of the friends of the several persons accused. To give you an instance: one of the judges themselves, who thought I pressed too hard upon a defendant whom he favoured, could not forbear interrupting me; "Give me leave," said I, "to go on; for when I shall have said all I meant to say, he will still be as innocent as he was before." From hence you will collect what a scene of contention I went through, and what enemies I brought upon myself. However, it was but for a season. For, though an honest discharge of one's duty may, for the time, offend those it opposes; yet it will, at last, be justified and admired, even by the very men who suffer from it.

Thus I have laid before you, in the clearest manner I am able, this whole transaction. You will regret, perhaps, the reading of so long a letter, and tell me it was scarce worth the trouble. Ask me then no more what is doing at Rome; and remember, in my excuse, that, considering the time this trial took up, the great number of persons concerned, and the several proceedings against them, my letter is of no unreasonable length; and I really think I have related the whole with as much brevity as exactness.—But, upon recollection, I must recall that last word: for I perceive, a little too late indeed, that I have omitted a material circumstance. However, I will mention it here, though somewhat out of its place. In this I have the example of Homer, and several other great names, to keep me in countenance; and the critics will tell you, this inverted manner of relating facts has its beauties: but, upon my word, it is a beauty I had not at all in view. One of the witnesses, whether in resentment that he was summoned contrary to his inclination, or that he was suborned by some of the parties accused, to weaken the credit of the charge, desired leave to exhibit articles against Norbanus Licinianus, one of the deputies, and a commissioner appointed to carry on the present prosecution; alledging, that he had prevaricated* in his charge against Casta, the wife of Classicus. The law directs, that the party accused shall

* A prevaricator is defined, by the civilians, to be one that betrays the cause to the adversary, and turns on the criminal's side, whom he ought to prosecute.

be first proceeded against, before any information shall be received to the prejudice of the person who brings the charge; because, how far the information is to be credited, will best appear from the manner in which the original cause is conducted. But so extremely odious was Norbanus, that neither the authority of the laws, nor a regard to his public function, could protect him. He was a man of an infamous character, who, like many others, had used his interest with Domitian to very flagitious purposes. He was appointed one of the commissioners by the province to manage this trial, not because they had any opinion of his integrity, but as being a declared enemy to Classicus, by whom he had been banished. Norbanus desired he might have time allowed him for his defence, and a copy of the articles of his accusation; both which were refused him, and he was ordered to answer immediately to the charge. He did so; and when I consider the genius and character of the man, I know not whether I should say, with great confidence, or great spirit, but undoubtedly without the least embarrassment. There were many articles alledged against him, much more to his disadvantage than the crime with which he was particularly charged. Among the rest, Pomponius Rufus, and Libo Frugi, persons of consular dignity, deposed, that he was counsel, in the reign of Domitian, for those infamous wretches, who had informed against Salvius Liberalis. In short, Norbanus was condemned and banished. When, therefore, I entered upon the charge against Casta, I insisted singly upon this sentence against Norba-

nus. But I urged this to little purpose; for, by a very unprecedented, and, indeed, a contradictory way of proceeding, the person accused was acquitted, while he, who had entered into this combination in her favour, was condemned. You will be curious to be informed how we, who were counsel against her, acted in this extraordinary conjuncture. We acquainted the senate, that, as we had received all our information from Norbanus, we could not, if he should be convicted of collusion with this woman, proceed without new instructions: having said this, we sat down during his whole trial, without interposing. Norbanus, after his conviction, continued present every day throughout the remainder of the proceedings, and preserved the same firmness, or unembarrassed countenance, to the last. And here, upon reviewing my letter, I find I have been guilty of another omission. I should have told you, that Salvius Liberalis inveighed strongly against the rest of the deputies; insisting, that they had betrayed the trust reposed in them by the province, and had not brought to justice all the parties they were directed to prosecute. As he is a man of great warmth of temper and much eloquence, they were really in some danger. But I took those worthy persons under my protection, and they are so grateful as to acknowledge I saved them from the storm with which they were threatened. And now, my friend, I will put an end to my letter in good earnest; nor detain you with adding a syllable more, even though I should find that some circumstances have still escaped me. Farewell.

LETTER X.

TO SPURINNA AND COCCIA.*

I DID not, it is true, acquaint you, at my last visit, that I had composed something in praise of your son; because it was not written in order to be mentioned, but merely as a private tribute of affection to his memory, and as a consolation to me in my concern for the loss of him. Besides, my dear Spurinna, as you told me you heard I had read some piece to certain friends, I imagined you were informed, at the same time, of the subject; and I was unwilling to cast a gloom upon your cheerfulness in that season of gaiety in which I found you, by recalling to your remembrance so severe a misfortune. I have even still some doubt, whether I should only send you what I then recited, as you desire, or join with it what I design for another essay: for a small tract was not only insufficient to give due scope to the sentiments of my heart, and to comprise the full offerings I would pay to one whose memory I so infinitely love and honour; but it seemed also more for the interest of his fame, to have it thus disseminated by separate pieces. But the consideration, that it will be treating you with a more friendly confidence to transmit to you the whole now, rather than reserve part of it to another time, has determined me to do so; especially as you have assured me, you will not part

* Spurinna's wife.

with it out of your hands till I shall think proper to publish it. I beg you to give me a proof of the same unreserve, by pointing out to me what you shall judge would be best altered, omitted, or added. It is difficult (and I know it by what I feel myself) for a mind in affliction to attend to such little cares. However, as you would direct a painter or statuary, who was representing the figure of your son, what parts he should retouch or express; so I hope you will guide and inform my hand in this more durable, or (as you are pleased to think it) this immortal picture of his mind, which I am endeavouring to draw: for, the nearer it shall resemble the original, and the more finished it shall be, so much the more lasting it is likely to prove. Farewell.

LETTER XI.

TO JULIUS GENITOR.

IT is the generous disposition of Artemidorus to heighten the good offices of his friends; and in that light you must look upon those strong professions he makes of his obligations to me. It is true, indeed, when the philosophers were expelled* Rome, I visited him at his house near the city; and I ran the greater hazard in paying him that civility, as I was at that time prætor; I likewise supplied him with a considerable sum to discharge some debts

* Domitian banished the philosophers not only from Rome, but Italy, as Suetonius and A. Gellius inform us: among these was the celebrated Epictetus.

he had contracted upon very honourable occasions, though I was obliged to borrow the money myself; while his other friends, who, both in power and fortune, were capable of assisting him, stood coldly at a distance, without contributing any relief to his distress. This I did under the discouraging instances before my eyes of the sufferings of seven of my friends; Senecio, Rusticus, and Helvidius, being just then put to death, at the same time that Mauricus, Gratilla, Arria, and Fennia, were sent into exile: and scorched as I was with the lightning of the state, which thus flashed round me, I had great reason to expect it would not be long before it destroyed me too. But I do not deem myself, upon that account, as meriting the high encomiums my friend bestows upon me: all I pretend to is, that I was not guilty of the infamous meanness of abandoning him in his misfortunes. I had, as far as the difference of our ages would admit, a friendship for his father-in-law Musonius, whom I both loved and esteemed. Artemidorus himself I made acquaintance with when I was military tribune in Syria, where I entered into the strictest intimacy with him. And I consider it as a proof that there was something right in my disposition, by having so early discovered the merit of this amiable man, who, if he is not a philosopher, exceedingly resembles one; I am sure, at least, of all those who take upon themselves that title, I know none of a more sincere and unaffected integrity. I forbear to mention how he endures the extremities of heat and cold, how indefatigable in labour, how abstemious in the pleasures of the

table, and how absolutely he restrains all his appetites; for these qualities, remarkable as they would certainly be in any other character, are rendered less conspicuous in him, by the superior lustre of those more extraordinary virtues which recommended him to Musonius for a son-in-law, in preference to so many others of all ranks who paid their addresses to his daughter. I cannot, therefore, but be highly sensible of the advantageous terms in which he speaks of me to every body, and particularly to you. But I am apprehensive (to return to the observation with which I set out,) that the warmth of his benevolence may carry him beyond the bounds I deserve: for he, who is so free from all other errors, is extremely apt to fall into the good-natured one, of over-rating the merit of his friends. Farewell.

LETTER XII.

TO CATILIUS.

I ACCEPT of your invitation to supper; but I must make this agreement beforehand, that you dismiss me soon, and treat me frugally. Let our entertainment abound only in philosophical conversation, and even that too with moderation. There are certain offices which bring passengers into the streets at midnight, and which Cato himself could not safely fall in with; though I must confess, at the same time, that Julius Cæsar,* when

* Julius Cæsar wrote an invective against Cato of Utica, to which, it is probable, Pliny here alludes.

he reproaches him with that circumstance, exalts the character he meant to expose: for he describes those persons who met this reeling patriot, as blushing when they discovered who he was; and adds, "you would have thought that Cato had detected them, and not they Cato." Could he place the dignity of Cato in a stronger light, than by representing him thus venerable even in his cups? As for ourselves, nevertheless, let temperance not only spread our table, but regulate our hours: for we are not arrived at so exalted a reputation, that our enemies cannot censure our conduct without applauding it at the same time. Farewell.

LETTER XIII.

TO ROMANUS.

I HAVE sent you, as you desired, the panegyric I delivered in my late consulship, in honour of our most excellent emperor;* and I intended to have sent it though you had not made the request. I could wish, when you peruse this performance, you would reflect upon the difficulty, as well as the dignity of the subject. In other compositions, where the reader is not acquainted with the circumstances upon which they turn, the novelty of them engages his chief attention; but in a topic so known and exhausted as the present, he has nothing to divert him from considering the style and manner of his author; and the writer has a hard task to please

* Trajan.

his readers, when the whole force of their criticism is solely directed to those single points. But I should be glad that the arrangement, the metaphors, and connections, which I have employed in this discourse, might be particularly observed. A strong imagination, and pompous expression, will sometimes break out in the most unpolished writer; but regularity in the plan of a work, and propriety in the figures, are the distinguishing characteristics of an improved and correct genius. The shining and the elevated are not always to be affected. As shades in a picture show the luminous parts to more advantage, so the plain and simple, in writing, recommend and heighten the sublime. But I forget that I am talking to one, who is so complete a judge of these matters. I should rather beg of you to point out to me what you shall think requires correction: for, if I should find that you dislike some parts, I shall be more inclined to believe you approve of the rest. Farewell.

LETTER XIV.

TO ACILIUS.

THE atrocious treatment which Largius Macedo, a person of prætorian rank, lately received from his slaves, is so extremely tragical, that it deserves to be the subject of a more considerable narrative than a private letter: though, at the same time, it must be acknowledged, there was a haughtiness and severity in his behaviour towards them, which shewed him little mindful that his own father

was once in the same servile state. They surrounded him as he was bathing at his villa near Formiæ, and some beat him about the face and head, whilst others trampled upon his breast, his belly, and his privy parts: when they imagined they had thus completed their intentions, they threw him upon the burning pavement of the hot bath, to try if there was any remaining life left in him. He lay there stretched out, and motionless, either as being really senseless, or only counterfeiting; upon which they concluded him actually dead. In this condition they brought him out, pretending that he was suffocated by the heat of the bath. Some of his more trusty servants received him, and the alarm being spread through the family, his concubines ran to him with the most violent shrieks. The noise of their cries, together with the fresh air, brought him a little to himself, and he gave signs (as he now safely might) that he was not quite dead. The murderers immediately made their escape; but the greater part of them are taken, and they are in pursuit of the rest. By proper application, he was, with great difficulty, kept alive for a few days, and then expired; having, however, the satisfaction, before he died, of knowing, that just vengeance would be inflicted on his assassins. Thus you see, to what indignities, outrages, and dangers, we are exposed. Lenity and good treatment is no security from the villanies of one's servants; for it is malice, and not reflection, that arms such ruffians against their masters. So much for this piece of news: and now, I think, I am exhausted. But you will be apt, I imagine, to

ask, "Is this all?" In truth it is; otherwise, you should have it; for my paper and my time too, (as it is a holiday with me,) will allow me to add more. Upon recollection, however, I can tell you one farther circumstance relating to Macedo, which just now occurs to me. As he was once in a public bath at Rome, a singular, and (as it should seem by the manner of his death) an ominous accident happened to him. A slave of Macedo's, in order to make way for his master, laid his hand gently upon a Roman knight, who, suddenly turning round, by mistake, gave Macedo so violent a blow, that he almost knocked him down. Thus the bath seems to have been fatal to him by a kind of gradation; for, first, he received an indignity in one bath, and was afterwards assassinated in another. Farewell.

LETTER XV.

TO PROCULUS.

YOU desire me to read your poems during my recess, and to examine whether they are fit for public view; and, after requesting me to turn some of my leisure hours from my own studies to yours, you remind me, that Tully was remarkable for his generous encouragement and patronage of poetical geniuses. But you did not do me justice, if you supposed I wanted either intreaty or example upon this occasion, who not only worship the Muses with the most religious veneration, but have also the warmest friendship for yourself: I shall there-

fore do what you require, with equal pleasure and attention. I believe I may venture to declare, before hand, that your performance has great merit, and ought by no means to be suppressed; at least, that was my opinion when I heard you recite it: if, indeed, your skilful manner of reading, and sweetness of elocution, did not impose upon my judgment. I trust, however, the charming cadence did not entirely overcome the force of my criticism; it might, possibly, a little soften its severity, but could not totally turn its edge. I think, therefore, I may safely pronounce this my opinion of your poems in general: what they are in their several parts, I shall judge when I read them. Farewell.

LETTER XVI.

TO NEPOS.

I HAVE frequently observed, that amongst the noble actions and remarkable sayings of distinguished persons in either sex, those which have been most celebrated have not always been the most worthy of admiration; and I am confirmed in this opinion, by a conversation I had yesterday with Fannia. This lady is grand-daughter to that famous Arria, who animated her husband to meet death, by her own glorious example. She informed me of several particulars relating to Arria, not less heroical than this applauded action of her's, though less the subject of general renown; and which, I am persuaded, will raise her as much in

your admiration as they did in mine. Her husband, Cæcinna Pætus, and her son, were each attacked at the same time with a dangerous illness, of which the son died. This youth, who had a most beautiful person and amiable behaviour, was not less endeared to his parents by his virtues than by the ties of affection. His mother managed his funeral so privately, that Pætus did not know of his death. Whenever she came into his bed-chamber, she pretended her son was better; and, as often as he enquired concerning his health, she answered, he had rested well, or had eaten with an appetite. When she found she could no longer restrain her grief, but her tears were gushing out, she would leave the room, and, having given vent to her passion, return again with dry eyes, and a serene countenance, as if she had dismissed every sentiment of sorrow at her entrance. Her resolution,* no doubt, was truly noble, when, drawing the

* The story, as mentioned by several of the ancient historians, is to this purpose: Pætus having joined Scribonianus, who was in arms, in Illyria, against Claudius, was taken after the death of the latter, and condemned to death. Arria having, in vain, solicited his life, persuaded him to destroy himself, rather than suffer the ignominy of falling by the executioner's hands; and, in order to encourage him to an act, to which, it seems, he was not much inclined, she set him the example in the manner Pliny relates.

In a pleasure-house belonging to the *Villa Ludovisa*, at Rome, there is a fine statue representing this action: Pætus is stabbing himself with one hand, and holds up the dying Arria with the other. Her sinking body hangs so loose, as if every joint were relaxed." *Wright's Travels*, p. 334. Martial, also, has celebrated his heroic action in a famous epigram:

Casta suo gladium cum traderet Arria Pæto,
Quem de visceribus traxerat ipsa suis,

dagger, she plunged it in her breast, and then presented it to her husband with that ever memorable, I had almost said that divine expression, "Pætus, it is not painful." It must, however, be considered, when she spoke and acted thus, she was encouraged and supported by the prospect of immortal glory. But was it not something much greater, without the aid of such animating motives, to hide her tears, to conceal her grief, and cheerfully act the mother, when she was a mother no more?

Scribonianus had taken up arms in Illyria against Claudius, where, having lost his life, Pætus, who was of his party, was brought prisoner to Rome. When they were going to put him on board a ship, Arria besought the soldiers, that she might be permitted to attend him: "Certainly," said she, "you cannot refuse a man of consular dignity, as he is, a few slaves to wait upon him; but, if you will take me, I alone will perform their office." Her request was refused; upon which she hired a small fishing-vessel, and boldly ventured to follow the ship. At her return to Rome, she met the wife of Scribonianus, in the emperor's palace, who, pressing her to discover all she knew of that insurrection, "What!" said she, "shall I regard thy advice, who sawest thy husband murdered even in thy very arms, and yet survivest

Si qua fides, vulnus quod feci non dolet, inquit,
Sed quod tu facies, hoc mihi, Pæte, dolet. L. 1. 14.

When from her breast chaste Arria snatch'd the sword,
And gave the deathful weapon to her lord,
"My wound," she said, "believe me, does not smart;
"'Tis thine alone, my Pætus, pains my heart."

him?" An expression which evinces, that the glorious manner in which she put an end to her life, was no unpremeditated effect of sudden passion. When Thrasea, who married her daughter, was dissuading her from her purpose of destroying herself, and, among other arguments, said to her, "Would you then advise your daughter to die with me, if my life were to be taken from me?" "Most certainly I would," she replied, "if she had lived as long, and in as much harmony with you, as I have with my Pætus." This answer greatly heightened the alarm of her family, and made them observe her for the future more narrowly; which, when she perceived, she assured them all their caution would be to no purpose. "You may oblige me," said she, "to execute my resolution in a way that will give me more pain, but it is impossible you should prevent it." She had scarce said this, when she sprang from her chair, and running her head with the utmost violence against the wall, fell down in appearance dead: but being brought to herself, "I told you," said she, "if you would not suffer me to take an easy path to death, I should make my way to it through some more difficult passage." Now, is there not, my friend, something much greater in all this, than in the so-much-talked-of "Pætus, it is not painful?" to which, indeed, it seems to have led the way: and yet this last is the favourite topic of fame, while all the former are passed over in profound silence. Whence I cannot but infer, what I observed in the beginning of my letter, that the noblest actions are not always the most celebrated. Farewell.

LETTER XVII.

TO SERVIANUS.

TO what shall I attribute your long silence? Is it want of health, or want of leisure, that prevents your writing? Or, is it, perhaps, that you have no opportunity of conveying your letters? Free me, I entreat you, from the perplexity of these doubts; for they are more, be assured, than I am able to support; and do so, even though it be at the expence of an express messenger: I will gladly bear his charges, and even reward him too, should he bring me the news I wish. As for myself, I am well, if to *be well*, can, with any propriety, be said of a man, who lives in the utmost suspense and anxiety, under the apprehension of all the accidents which can possibly befal the friend he most affectionately loves. Farewell.

LETTER XVIII.

TO SEVERUS.

I WAS obliged, by my consular office, to compliment the emperor* in the name of the republic: but after I had performed that ceremony in the senate in the usual manner, and as fully as the time and place would allow, I thought it agreeable to the affection of a good subject, to enlarge those

* Trajan.

general heads, and extend them into a complete discourse. My principal view in doing so, was to confirm the emperor in his virtues, by paying that tribute of applause to them which they so justly deserve; and, at the same time, to direct future princes, not in the formal way of lecture, but by *his* more engaging example, to those paths they must pursue, if they would attain the same heights of glory. To instruct sovereigns how to form their conduct, is a noble, but difficult task, and may, perhaps, be deemed presumption; but to applaud the character of an accomplished prince, and to hold him out to posterity as a light to guide succeeding monarchs, is a method equally useful, and much more modest. It afforded me a very singular pleasure, when I recited this panegyric in a private assembly, that my friends gave me their company, though I did not solicit them in the usual form of circular billets, but only required their attendance, if it would be agreeable to them, and they should happen to be at leisure. You know the excuses which are generally made at Rome, to avoid invitations of this kind, and prior engagements are usually alledged; yet, though the weather proved extremely bad at that time, they attended the recital for two days together: and when I thought it would be unreasonable to detain them any longer, they insisted upon my going through with it the next day. Shall I consider this as an honour done to myself, or to literature? Rather let me suppose to the latter, which, though well nigh extinct, seems to be now again reviving amongst us. Yet what was the subject which raised this uncommon at-

tention? No other than what formerly, even in the senate, where we were obliged to submit to it, we could not endure to hear, though but for a few moments. But now, you see, we have patience to recite and listen to a topic of the same nature for three days together: and the reason of the difference is, not that we have more eloquence, but more liberty than formerly, and consequently write with a more unconstrained spirit. It is an additional glory, therefore, to our present emperor, that this sort of harangues, which were once as disgusting as they were false, are now as pleasing as they are sincere. But it was not only the earnest attention of my audience which afforded me pleasure; I was greatly delighted, too, with the justness of their taste; for I observed, that the more rigid sentiments of my discourse gave them peculiar satisfaction. It is true, indeed, this work, which was written for the perusal of the world in general, was read only to a few; however, I would willingly consider their particular judgment as an earnest of that of the public, and rejoice at their manly taste, as if it were universally spread. It was in eloquence as in music, the vitiated ears of the audience introduced a depraved stile; but now I am inclined to hope, as a more correct judgment prevails in the public, our compositions of both kinds will improve too; for those authors, whose only view is to please, will form their works upon the popular taste. I trust, however, in subjects of this nature, the florid style is most proper; and am so far from thinking that the vivid colouring I have used, will be esteemed foreign and unnatural, that I am most apprehensive

censure will fall upon those parts where the diction is most simple and unornamented. Nevertheless, I sincerely wish the time may come, and that it now were, when the smooth and luscious manner, which has infected our stile, shall give place, as it ought, to severe and chaste composition.

Thus I have given you an account how I have been employed these last three days, that your absence might not entirely deprive you of a pleasure, which, from your friendship to me, and the part you take in every thing that concerns the interest of literature, I know you would have received, if you had been present. Farewell.

LETTER XIX.

TO CALVISIUS RUFUS.

I MUST have recourse to you, as usual, in an affair which concerns my finances. An estate is offered to be sold, which lies contiguous to mine, and, indeed, is intermixed with it. There are several circumstances which strongly incline me to this purchase, as there are other no less weighty which deter me from it. The first recommendation it has, is the beauty which will result from uniting this farm to my own lands; the next, the advantage, as well as the pleasure, of being able to visit it under one trouble and expence; to have it superintended by the same steward; cultivated almost by the same husbandmen; and to have only a single mansion to support and embellish, as it will be sufficient to keep up the other just in com-

mon repair. I take into this account furniture, house-keepers, gardeners, artificers, and all the apparatus that relates to the game, as it saves a very considerable expence, when you are not obliged to keep them at more houses than one. On the other hand, I don't know whether it is prudent to venture so much of one's property exposed to the same climate, and to the same casualties; it seems a more sure method of guarding against the caprices of fortune, to distribute our possessions into different situations: besides, there is something extremely amusing in shifting the scene, and travelling from one estate to another. But to mention the point of principal difficulty:—the lands are rich, fertile, and well-watered, consisting chiefly of meadow-grounds, vineyards, and woods; the produce of which last, though it is not very great, or very profitable, yet seldom fails: but then, to balance the advantages of soil, the present tenants have been extremely oppressed. The person, who was last in possession, used frequently to seize and sell their stock, by which means, though he lessened the debt for the present, yet, in the event, he greatly impoverished the estate, and the consequence was, that the tenants were again in arrears. I shall be obliged, therefore, to furnish these honest farmers with a new supply of hands for tillage, which I must be at the expence of buying, as there are none left upon the estate, neither have I any bond-slaves* of my own.—And now it remains only to inform you

* The Romans used to employ their criminals in the lower offices of husbandry, such as ploughing, &c. Plin. H. N. l. 18. 3.

of the price, which is three millions of sesterces.* It has been formerly sold for five millions ;† but, partly by the general calamity of the times, and partly by its being thus stripped of labourers, the income of this estate is reduced, and consequently its value. You will be inclined, perhaps, to enquire, whether I can easily raise the purchase-money? It is true, my estate is chiefly in land, though I have also some money placed out at interest; but I can, without difficulty, borrow any sum I may want. I have always a sure resource in the purse of my wife's mother, which I can use with the same freedom as my own; so that you need not give yourself any trouble as to that article, if you should have no other objections, which I beg you would very accurately consider; for, as in every thing else, so particularly in matters of œconomy, no man has more judgment and experience than yourself. Farewell.

LETTER XX.

TO MAXIMUS.

YOU remember, no doubt, to have read what commotions were occasioned by the law, which ordains that the elections of magistrates‡ shall be

* About L. 24,000 of our money.

† About L. 40,000 of our money.

‡ The author of this law was one Gabinius, a tribune of the people, A. U. 614. It gave a very considerable blow to the influence of the nobility, as in this way of balloting it could not be discovered

by balloting, and how much the author of it was both approved and condemned. Yet this very law the senate lately unanimously revived; and, upon the election day, with one consent, called for the ballots. It must be owned, the method by open votes had introduced into the senate more riot and disorder than is seen even in the assemblies of the people; all regularity in speaking, all decency of silence, all dignity of character, was disregarded; it was universal dissonance and clamour: here, the several candidates running from side to side with their patrons; there, a troop collected together in the middle of the senate, and, in short, the whole assembly dividing into separate parties, created the most indecent confusion. Thus widely had we departed from the manners of our ancestors, who conducted these elections with a calmness and regularity suitable to the reverence which is due to the majesty of the place. I have been informed, by some who remembered those times, that the method observed in their assemblies was this: the name of the person who offered himself for any office being called over, a profound silence ensued, when immediately the candidate appeared; who, after he had spoken for himself, and given an account to the senate of his manner of life, called witnesses in support of his character. These were either the person under whom he had served in the army, or to whom he had been quæstor, or both,

on which side the people gave their votes, and consequently took off that restraint they before lay under, by the fear of offending their superiors.

(if the case admitted of it) to whom he also joined some of those friends who espoused his interest. They delivered what they had to say in his favour in a few words, but with great dignity; and this had far more influence than the modern method of humble solicitation. Sometimes the candidate would object either to the birth, or age, or character of his competitor; to which the senate would listen with a severe and impartial attention: and thus was merit generally preferred to interest. But corruption having abused this wise institution of our ancestors, we were obliged to have recourse to the way of balloting, as the most probable remedy for the evil. The method being new, and immediately put in practice, it answered the present purpose very well; but, I am afraid, in process of time, it will introduce new inconveniences; as this manner of balloting seems to afford a sort of screen to injustice and partiality. For, how few are there, who preserve the same delicacy of conduct in secret, as when exposed to the view of the world? The truth is, the generality of mankind revere fame more than conscience. But this, perhaps, may be pronouncing too hastily upon a future event: be it therefore as it hereafter may, we have, in the mean while, obtained, by this method, an election of such magistrates as best deserved the honour. For, it was with us, as with that sort of judges who are named upon the spot; we were taken before we had time to be biassed, and, therefore, we determined impartially.

I have given you this detail, not only as a piece of news, but because I am glad to seize every op-

portunity of speaking of affairs concerning the republic; a subject which, as we have fewer occasions of mentioning than our ancestors, so we ought to be more careful not to let any of them slip. In good earnest, I am tired with repeating over and over the same compliments, "How d'ye do?" and "I hope you are well?" Why should our letters for ever turn upon trivial and domestic concerns? It is true, indeed, the direction of the public weal is in the hands of a single person, who, for the general good, takes upon himself to ease us of the whole care and weight of government; but still that bountiful source of power permits, by a very generous dispensation, some streams to flow down to us; and of these we may not only partake ourselves, but thus, as it were, administer them to our absent friends. Farewell.

LETTER XXI.

TO PRISCUS.

I HAVE just received an account of the death of poor Martial, which much concerns me. He was a man of an acute and lively genius, and his writings abound with much satirical wit, conducted, at the same time, by equal candour. When he left Rome, I made him a present to defray the charges of his journey; and I gave it to him, not only as a testimony of my friendship, but in return for the verses with which he had complimented me. It was the custom of the ancients to distinguish those poets with honourable and pecuniary rewards, who

had celebrated particular persons or cities in their verses, but this good custom, with every other that is generous and noble, is now grown out of fashion; and, in consequence of having ceased to act laudably, we consider praise as an impertinent and worthless tribute. You will be desirous, perhaps, to see the verses which merited this acknowledgment from me; and I believe I can, from my memory, partly satisfy your curiosity, without referring you to his works: but if you should be pleased with this specimen, you must turn to his poems for the rest. He addresses himself to his Muse, whom he directs to go to my house upon the *Esquiliæ*;* but to approach it with respect:

Go, wanton Muse, but go with care,
Nor meet, ill-timed, my Pliny's ear:
He, by sage Minerva taught,
Gives the day to studious thought,
And plans that eloquence divine,
Which shall to future ages shine,
And rival, wond'rous Tully! thine.
Then, cautious, watch the festive hour,
When Bacchus reigns in all his power;
When, crowned with fragrant chaplets gay,
Catos might read my frolic lay.†

Do you not think that the poet, who addressed these lines to me, deserved some friendly marks of my bounty *then*, and of my sorrow *now*? For he gave me the best he had to bestow, and it was want of power only that his present was not more valuable. But, indeed, what can be conferred more

* One of the seven famous hills upon which Rome was situated.

† Mart. l. x. 19.

valuable than the honour of never-fading praise? And though it should be granted, that his poems will not long survive their author, still, no doubt, he flattered himself they would prove immortal. Farewell.

THE LETTERS OF PLINY.

BOOK FOURTH.

LETTER I.

TO FABATUS.

YOU have long desired a visit from your grand-daughter,* accompanied by me. Nothing, be assured, could be more agreeable to us both; for we equally wish to see you, and are determined to delay that pleasure no longer. For this purpose our baggage is actually making ready, and we are hastening to you with all the expedition the roads will permit. We shall stop only once, and that for a short time; intending to turn a little out of the way, in order to go into Tuscany: not for the sake of looking upon our estate, and into our family concerns, for that we could defer to another opportunity, but to perform an indispensable duty. There is a town near my estate, called Tifernum-upon-the-Tiber,† which put itself under my patronage when I was yet a youth. These people enter warmly into my interest, celebrate my arrival

* Calphurnia, Pliny's wife.

† Now Citta di Castello.

among them with public rejoicings; express the greatest concern when I leave them; and, in short, give every proof of an affection towards me as strong as it is undeserved. That I may return their good offices (for what generous mind can bear to be excelled in acts of friendship?) I have erected a temple in this place, at my own expence; and, as it is finished, it would be a sort of impiety to delay the dedication of it any longer. We design, therefore, to be present on the day that ceremony is to be performed; and I have resolved to celebrate it with a general feast. We may possibly continue there all the next day, but we shall make so much the more expedition in our journey afterwards. May we have the happiness to find you and your daughter in good health! in good spirits I am sure we shall, if you should see us safely arrived. Farewell.

LETTER II.

TO CLEMENS.

REGULUS has lost his son; and I should call it a misfortune he well deserves, but that I am persuaded he does not think it one. The boy was of a sprightly, but ambiguous turn; however, he seemed capable of going right, if he should escape the infection of his father's example. Regulus gave him his freedom,* in order to entitle him to the

* The Romans had an absolute power over their children, of which no age or station of the latter deprived them. See B. VIII. Let. 18. note.

estate left him by his mother; and when he got into possession of it, endeavoured (as the character of the man made it generally reported) to wheedle him out of it, by the most singular and disgraceful indulgences. This, perhaps, you will scarce think credible; but if you consider Regulus, you will not be long of that opinion. However, he now expresses his concern for the loss of this youth in a most extravagant manner. The boy had a great number of little horses for the different kinds of vehicles; dogs of various sorts, together with parrots, black-birds, and nightingales* in abundance: these Regulus slew† round the funeral pile

* This bird was much esteemed amongst nice eaters, and was sold at a high price. Horace mentions, as an instance of great extravagance, two brothers, who used to dine upon them.

Quinti progenies Arri, par nobile fratrum——
Luscinias soliti impenso prandere coëmtas. L. 2. Sat. 3.

A noble pair of brothers——
On nightingales of monstrous purchase dined. *Mr. Francis.*

† From an unaccountable notion that prevailed among the ancients, that the ghosts delighted in blood, it was customary to kill a great number of beasts, and throw them on the funeral pile. In the more ignorant and barbarous ages, men were the unhappy victims of this horrid rite. Even the compassionate Æneas is represented by Virgil as practising this cruel ceremony, at the funeral honours which he performed to the memory of the unfortunate Pallas:

——*Sulmone creatos*
Quatuor hic juvenes, totidem quos educat Ufens,
Viventes rapit; inferias quos immolat umbris,
Captivoque rogi perfundat sanguine flammas. Æn. 10. 517.

Four youths by Sulmo, four by Ufens bred,
Unhappy victims! destined to the dead,
He seized alive, to offer on the pyre,
And sprinkle, with their blood, the funeral fire. *Mr. Pitt.*

of his son, in all the ostentation of affected grief. He is visited upon this occasion by a surprising number of people, who, though they secretly detest and abhor the man, yet are as assiduous in attentions, as if they were actuated by a principle of real esteem and affection; in short, they endeavour to recommend themselves to his favour, by following his own hypocritical example. He is retired to his villa across the Tiber, where he has covered a vast extent of ground with his porticoes, and crowded all the shore with his statues; for he unites prodigality with avarice, and vain-glory with infamy. By his continuing at this distance from the city, he endangers the health of those visitors, who go to pay him their compliments of condolence at this unwholesome season; and he seems to consider the hazard to which they are exposed, as an additional circumstance of consolation. He gives out, with his usual absurdity, that he designs to marry. You must expect, therefore, to hear shortly of the wedding of a man, oppressed with sorrow and with years; that is, of one who marries both too soon and too late. Do you ask my reason for thinking so? Certainly, not because he affirms it himself, (for never was there so infamous a liar,) but because there is no doubt that Regulus will do every thing he ought not. Farewell.

LETTER III.

TO ANTONINUS.

THAT you have twice enjoyed the dignity consul, with a conduct equal to that of our most

illustrious ancestors; that few (your modesty will not suffer me to say none) ever have, or ever will, come up to the integrity and wisdom of your Asiatic administration; that in virtue, in authority, and even in years, you are the first of Romans; these, most certainly, are shining and noble parts of your character; nevertheless, I own, it is in your retired hours that I most admire you. To season the severity of business with the sprightliness of wit, and to temper wisdom with politeness, is as difficult as it is great; yet, these uncommon qualities you have most happily united in those wonderful charms which grace both your conversation and your writings. Your lips, like the venerable old man's in Homer,* drop honey; and one would imagine the bee had diffused her sweetness over all you compose. These were the sentiments impressed upon me, when I lately read your Greek epigrams and satires. What elegance, what beauties, shine in this collection! How sweetly the numbers flow, and how exactly are they wrought up in the true spirit of the ancients! What a vein of wit runs through every line, and how conformable is the whole to the rules of just criticism! I fancied I had in my hands Callimachus or Herodes, or, if possible, some poet even superior to

* ——————Νεςορ
Ηδυεπης ανορουσε. λιγυς Πυλιων αγορητης,
Τȣ ȣ̓ απο γλωσσης μελιτος γλυκιων ρεεν αϋδη.

Il. i. 247.

Experienced Nestor, in persuasion skilled,
Words sweet as honey from his lips distilled.

POPE.

these: though, indeed, neither of those authors excelled, as you have, in both those species of poetry. Is it possible, that a Roman can write Greek in so much perfection? I protest I do not believe Athens herself can be more attic. In short, I cannot but envy Greece the honour of your preference: and since you can write thus eloquently in a foreign language, it does not rest upon conjecture what you could have performed in your own. Farewell.

LETTER IV.

TO SOSSIUS.

I HAVE a very singular value for Calvisius Nepos; as, indeed, he is a man of indefatigable industry, great eloquence, and (what I prefer to all the rest) of consummate integrity: he is nephew to your friend and my guest Calvisius. I beg, therefore, you would do him and his uncle the honour of making him one of the half-yearly tribunes of the army.* It will be an obligation to both of us, as well as to Nepos, whom, I am persuaded, you will think equally deserving your favour. You have bestowed numberless good offices upon many; but, I will venture to say, you never conferred one that was better placed than in the present instance, and few, perhaps, so well. Farewell.

* Their business was to decide all controversies in the army, to take care of the works and camp, &c. Their command lasted but six months. KENNET'S *Rom. Antiq.*

LETTER V.

TO SPARSUS.

IT is said, when Æschines,* at the request of the Rhodians, read to them one of his orations, and then that which Demosthenes delivered upon the same occasion, they were both received with the loudest applause. I am not surprised that the harangues of such excellent orators should be thus warmly admired, when I consider, that even a speech of mine, which I lately recited before a very judicious audience, was heard with equal earnestness and approbation, during two days successively; yet there was not the pleasure which arises from a contention between two rival pieces, to awaken their attention. The Rhodians, besides the particular merit of the respective orations, had their curiosity excited by comparing them together: but mine, though destitute of that recommendation, had the good fortune to please: whether deservedly or not, you will judge when you read the performance; the extent of which will not permit me to introduce it to you with a longer preface. I must therefore shorten my letter, in order to reconcile you the better to the length of the speech that attends it; which, however, I have not enlarged beyond the bounds my subject required. Farewell.

* See Book II. Let. 3.

LETTER VI.

TO NASO.

A STORM of hail, I am informed, has destroyed all the produce of my estate in Tuscany; while that which I have on the other side the Po, though it has proved extremely fruitful this season, yet, from the excessive cheapness of every thing, turns to small account. Laurentinum is the single possession which yields me any advantage. I have nothing there, indeed, but a house and gardens; all the rest is barren sands; still, however, my best productions rise at Laurentinum. It is there I cultivate, if not my lands, at least my mind, and employ much of my time in writing. As, in other parts of my estate, I can show you full barns; so here I can entertain you with good store of the literary kind. Let me advise you then, if you wish for a fertile and never-failing possession, to purchase some spot upon this studious and contemplative coast. Farewell.

LETTER VII.

TO LEPIDUS.

I HAVE often told you, that Regulus is a man of spirit: whatever he engages in, he is sure to execute in a most extraordinary manner. He chose lately to be extremely concerned for the loss of his son: accordingly he mourned for him in a

way which no man ever mourned before. He took it into his head, that he would have several statues and representations of his person; immediately all the artizans in Rome are set to work. Paint, wax, brass, silver, ivory, marble, all exhibit the figure of young Regulus. Not long ago he read, before a numerous audience, a long panegyric upon the life of his son: a large volume upon the life of a boy! Then a thousand transcribers were employed to copy this curious narrative, which he dispersed all over the empire. He wrote, likewise, a sort of circular letter to the several Decurii,* to desire they would select one of their order, who had a strong clear voice, to read this eulogy to the people; and I am informed it has been read accordingly. Had this spirit (or whatever else you will call vehemence in executing all one undertakes) been rightly applied, what infinite good might it have produced! The misfortune is, this warmth of temper is generally strongest in men of vicious characters; for, as ignorance begets rashness, and knowledge inspires deliberation, so modesty is apt to check the exertions of genius, whilst confidence animates and excites the activity of little minds. Regulus is a signal proof of the truth of this observation: he has a weak voice, an awkward address, an indistinct utterance, a slow imagination, and no memory; in a word, he is nothing but a composition of absurdity; and yet, by the assistance of a flighty turn, and much impudence, he passes with many for a finished orator. Herennius Senecio re-

* See Book I. Let. 8. in note.

versed Cato's* definition of an orator, and applied it, with great justness, to Regulus: "An orator," said he, "is a bad man, unskilled in the art of speaking." And, in fact, Cato's definition is not

* Cato, as we learn from Nonius, composed a treatise upon rhetoric, for the use of his son, wherein he defined an orator to be, "a good man skilled in the art of speaking." The judicious Quinctilian has embraced this notion, and employs a whole chapter to prove, that, "none but a good man can be an orator;" for want of virtue is, in this excellent critic's estimation, want of genius: noble sentiments, and unworthy actions, can never, he maintains, reside in the same bosom: "*in eodem pectore nullum est honestum turpiumque consortium.*" Inst. Orat. lib. xii. c. 1.—Longinus establishes the same principle; as it, indeed, prevails in general, throughout the ancients, which they extend not only to oratory, but poetry, and all the fine arts. A modern author (whom future ages will mention with the best of the ancients) has adopted this opinion, and illustrated it in several parts of his writings: "Knavery," says that noble writer, "is mere dissonance and disproportion; and though villains may have strong tones, and natural capacities of action, it is impossible that true *judgment* and *ingenuity* should reside where harmony and *honesty* have no being.—Thus the sense of inward numbers, the knowledge and *practice* of social virtues, and the familiarity and favour of the moral graces, are essential to the character of a deserving artist, and just favourite of the Muses. Thus are the *arts* and *virtues* mutually friends; and the science of *Virtuosos*, and that of *virtue* itself, become, in a manner, one and the same." *Characteristics*, Vol. 1. pp. 208. 338. Virtue, no doubt, is the highest good sense, and all deviations from moral rectitude are so many false reasonings; still, it must be owned and regretted, that great parts have two often been found united with great deficiences of the moral kind, to make the reality of that character either improbable or uncommon. Experience will force us to give credit to history in this case, rather than to philosophy; and oblige us to acknowledge, there is nothing inconsistent in what the elegant Paterculus says of Curio, whom he represents as *ingeniosissimo nequam et facundus male publico*; "a most ingeniously wicked, and eloquent to the destruction of his country." PATERC. *Hist.* 1. 2. 48.

a more exact description of a true orator, than Senecio's is of the character of this man. Would you make a suitable return to this letter? let me know if you, or any of my friends in your town, have, with an air of pleasantry, *mouthed* (as Demosthenes calls it) this melancholy piece to the people, like a stroller in the market-place. For so absurd a performance must move rather laughter than compassion; and, indeed, the composition is as puerile as the subject. Farewell.

LETTER VIII.

TO ARRIANUS.

MY advancement to the dignity of augur,* is an honour that justly, indeed, merits your congratulations; not only as it is highly glorious to receive, even in the slightest instances, a testimony of the approbation of so wise and judicious a prince;† but as it is also an ancient and sacred institution, which has this high and peculiar privilege annexed to it, that it is for life.‡ Other sacerdotal offices, though they may, perhaps, be equal to this in dignity, yet, as they are given, so they may be taken away; but fortune has no farther

* Their business was to interpret dreams, oracles, prodigies, &c. and to foretell whether any action should be fortunate or prejudicial, to particular persons, or to the whole commonwealth. Upon this account, they very often occasioned the displacing of magistrates, the deferring of public assemblies, &c. KENNET'S *Rom. Antig. p.* 67.

† Trajan. ‡ See Book II. Let. 1. in note.

power over *this*, than to bestow it. What recommends this dignity to me still more is, that I have the honour to succeed so illustrious a person as Julius Frontinus. He, for many years, upon the nomination day of proper persons to be received into the sacred college, constantly proposed me, as if he had a view to my being his successor; and since it has actually proved so in the event, I am willing to look upon it as something more than accident. But the circumstance, it seems, that most pleases you in this preferment, is, that Tully enjoyed the same post; and you rejoice (you tell me,) to find, that I follow his steps as closely in the path of honours, as I endeavour to do in that of eloquence. I wish, indeed, as I had the advantage to be elected earlier into the sacred college and consular office than Cicero, so I might, in my more advanced years, catch some spark, at least, of his divine genius! The former, as it is in the disposal of man, may be conferred on me, and on many others; but the latter is an attainment much too arduous for my powers, and is the gift alone of heaven. Farewell.

LETTER IX.

TO URSUS.

WE have been engaged, for several days past, in the cause of Julius Bassus; a man grown familiar with misfortunes, and rendered conspicuous by a series of calamities. In the reign of Vespasian, two private persons informed against him: and the affair being referred to the senate, it depended there

a considerable time; when, at last, he was honourably acquitted. During the time of Titus, he was under continual apprehensions of his displeasure, as being known to favour the interests of Domitian; yet, when the latter ascended the throne, Bassus was exiled, but afterwards recalled by Nerva. Having obtained the proconsulship of Bithynia, he was, at his return from thence, accused of bribery and extortion; and as he was prosecuted with great warmth, he was defended with equal spirit. The sentiments of the senate were much divided; however, the majority were on the most favourable side. Pomponius Rufus, a man of acute parts, and vehement in his manner of elocution, was counsel against him. He was seconded by Theophanes, one of the deputies from the province, and, indeed, the origin and instigator of this prosecution. I began the reply; for Bassus insisted, that the foundation of his defence should be laid by me. He desired me to represent the just consideration that was due to his illustrious birth, to his own rank, and to the persecution he had formerly suffered; that his accusers were informers by profession, who reaped considerable advantage by their trade;* and to display the true reasons which rendered him odious to the seditious, and particularly to Theophanes; but, above all, to confute the principal charge that was brought against him: for, in respect to all the other heinous articles of the accusation, he not only deserved to be acquitted, but highly commended. The circum-

* Informers had a fourth part of the effects of the persons convicted.

stance which pressed with the greatest weight in the case was, that, in the simplicity of his heart, he had incautiously received the gifts, which some of his friends in the province (for he had been among them before, as quæstor) thought proper to send him. This, which his accusers called rapine and extortion, Bassus justified under the name of *presents*. But then the laws expressly forbid persons in his station, to receive any presents whatsoever.—Now, what mode of defence should I adopt upon this occasion? If I denied the fact, I was afraid it would look like a tacit confession, that, supposing it true, it was actually extortion; besides, to disown what was so notorious, would be to strengthen, rather than to extenuate, the charge. And, indeed, he had put the denial out of the power of his counsel, if they had thought it proper; for he had acknowledged to several persons, and particularly to the emperor, that he had received, and returned, a few slight presents, both upon his birth-day, and at the feast of the Saturnalia.* Should I apply to the clemency of the senate? That would be ruining my client at once; by confessing, the nature of his offence was such, that there was no other way of saving him. Should I then justify the fact? But, in so doing, should have injured my own character, without rendering any service to Bassus. Under these difficulties, I thought it would be best to steer a middle course; and, I flatter myself, I happily hit upon it. But night coming on, separated,

* Celebrated in honour of Saturn; at which time it was customary for friends to send presents to one another.

as usual, the combatants. I had spoken for three hours and a half, so that I had still an hour and a half remaining. For the law having allowed six hours to the plaintiff, and nine to the defendant, Bassus had so divided this portion of time between me and the advocate who was to speak after me, that I had five hours, and the latter the rest. But perceiving my speech had made a favourable impression upon the senate, I thought it would be most advisable to add nothing more; for it is not prudent, you know, to push one's success too far. Besides, I was apprehensive I should not have strength to renew the defence the next day; as it is much easier to go on without interruption, than to resume after a long intermission. There was yet another consideration which had great weight with me: I was afraid, that, as the discontinuance of my speech would abate my own ardour, so the resumption of it might prove tiresome to my hearers. When an harangue is carried on in one continued flow, the speaker best keeps up his own ardour, and the attention of the audience; both which are apt to cool and become languid by intermission; just as a continued motion preserves the light of a torch, which, when once it is extinct, is not easily re-lumed. But Bassus, almost with tears in his eyes, earnestly entreated me to proceed with his defence for the remainder of the time; and I accordingly complied, preferring his interest to my own. The event proved agreeable to our wishes; for I found the attention of the senate as fresh and lively as if it had been rather animated than fatigued by my preceding speech. I was seconded by Luceius Albinus, who

entered so thoroughly into the principles of my reasoning, that our arguments, whilst they had the variety of different and distinct pleadings, had the connection and uniformity of one continued harangue. Herennius Pollio replied to us with great spirit and power: and, after him, Theophanes spoke again; in this, as in every thing else, discovering his uncommon assurance, by presuming to take up the time of the senate after two such eloquent persons, and of consular dignity,* had immediately preceded him. He continued haranguing till evening, and even beyond it; for lights were brought in. The next day, Titius Homulus, and Fronto, spoke admirably in defence of Bassus. The fourth day was employed in examining the proofs. Bæbius Macer, the consul elect, declared Bassus guilty, within the express words of the law, relating to bribery and extortion. Cæpio Hispo was of opinion, that, without affecting his dignity, the case should be referred to the ordinary judges: and both their sentiments were founded in reason. You will wonder how that can possibly be true, since they were so extremely different; but you will observe, that Macer, who considered the mere letter of the law, might very reasonably condemn him, when it appeared he had taken presents contrary to its express prohibition. On the other hand, Cæpio, supposing that the senate had a power (as

* The two persons here meant are Herennius Pollio, and Pomponius Rufus, mentioned above, who pleaded against Bassus, on the same side with Theophanes. Some critics, indeed, suppose Pliny includes himself; but the contrary seems plain from the context. See *Masson. vit. Plin.* 119.

undoubtedly it has) to mitigate or to urge the rigour of the laws, might, upon very good grounds, think this a case worthy of their clemency, as being (though, indeed, contrary to the express letter of the law, yet) not unfrequently practised. The motion of Cæpio prevailed; and, when he rose up to give the reasons for his vote, the same acclamations attended him as usually follow an approved decision. You will easily judge, therefore, how great the applause was after he had delivered his opinion, when he received such a singular mark of approbation before he had uttered a word. I find the sentiments of those without doors, as well as in the senate, are divided: They who approve of Cæpio's vote, condemn Macer's as severe and hard; on the contrary, the partizans of Macer's opinion treat the other as too mild, and, indeed, inconsistent. They assert, that it is highly absurd to send a man to be tried before the ordinary judges, and yet suffer him to retain his seat in the senate. I should have told you, that there was, besides those sentiments I have mentioned, a third opinion. Valerius Paulinus, who joined with Cæpio, was for adding, that the senate should proceed against Theophanes, after he should have discharged his commission, as deputy from the province: For he insisted, that Theophanes had been guilty of several of those misdemeanors which fell within the prohibition of this very law, and upon which he grounded his information against Bassus. But although this proposal was, in general, highly approved by the senate, yet the consuls thought proper to drop it: Paulinus, however, had the full credit of so hon-

est and bold a motion. At the breaking up of the senate, Bassus was received by great crowds of people with the highest demonstrations of joy, and the loudest acclamations. This new difficulty which he had fallen into, had recalled the remembrance of his former troubles; and a name, which had never been mentioned but in conjunction with some misfortune, together with the appearance of a fine person broken with sorrow and age, had raised a general compassion towards him. You may look upon this letter as the forerunner of my speech, which, long and copious as it is, I shall send you at large: But you must not expect it soon; for it is a subject of too much importance to be revised in haste. Farewell.

LETTER X.

TO SABINUS.

YOUR letter informs me, that Sabina, who appointed you and me her heirs, though she has no where expressly directed that Modestus shall have his freedom, yet has left him a legacy in the following words: "*I give, &c.—to Modestus, whom I have ordered to have his freedom:*" upon which you desire my sentiments. I have consulted the most learned lawyers, and they all agree Modestus is not entitled to his liberty, since it is not *expressly* given; and, consequently, that the legacy is void, as being devised to a slave.* But it appears plainly to be

* A slave was incapable of property; and, therefore, whatever he acquired became the right of his master.

a mistake in the testatrix; and, therefore, I think we ought to act, in this case, as if Sabina had directed, in so many words, what, it is clear, she imagined she had ordered. I am persuaded you will join with me in this opinion, who so religiously regard the will of the dead; which, indeed, where it can be discovered, will always be law to an honest mind. Honour is to you and me as strong an obligation, as the compulsion of law is to others. Let Modestus, then, enjoy his freedom and his legacy, in as full a manner, as if Sabina had observed all the requisite forms; as, indeed, they effectually do, who make a judicious choice of the persons whom they appoint their heirs. Farewell.

LETTER XI.

TO MINUTIANUS.

YOU have scarcely, I imagine, yet heard (for the news is but just arrived) that Licinianus is become a professor in Sicily. This unfortunate person, who lately enjoyed the dignity of prætor, and was esteemed the most eloquent of our advocates, is now fallen from a senator to an exile, from an orator to a teacher of rhetoric. Licinianus himself took notice of this sad change, in a pathetic speech which he made at the opening of his school; "Oh fortune," said he, "how capriciously dost thou sport with mankind! Thou makest rhetoricians of senators, and senators of rhetoricians!" a sarcasm so poignant and full of gall,* that one

* See Book III. Let. 9. p. 164, note.

might almost imagine he fixed upon this profession merely for the sake of an opportunity of applying it. Being dressed, when he first appeared in the chair, after the Grecian fashion, (for exiles are not permitted to wear the Roman gown,) "Alas," says he, looking upon his garment, "I am going to declaim in Latin!" You will think, perhaps, this situation, wretched and deplorable as it is, is what he well deserves, for having stained the honourable profession of an orator by his abominable lewdness. It is true, indeed, he confessed the crime with which he was charged; but whether it was from a consciousness of his guilt, or from an apprehension of worse consequences if he denied it, is not clear; for Domitian's vengeance generally raged with the greatest fury, where his evidence failed him most. That emperor had determined, that Cornelia Maximilla, one of the vestal virgins,* should be buried alive; from an extrava-

* "Their office was to attend upon the rites of Vesta, the chief part of which was the preservation of the holy fire. If this fire happened to go out, it was thought impiety to light it at any common flame, but they made use of the pure and unpolluted rays of the sun for that purpose. There were other holy things under their care, of which we have very uncertain accounts. The chief rules prescribed them were, to vow the strictest chastity for the space of 30 years. After this term was completed, they had liberty to leave the order. If they broke their vow of virginity, they were buried alive in a place allotted to that peculiar use."—*Kennet's Antiq.* Their character for sanctity was so great, that Livy mentions two of those virgins having violated their vows, as a prodigy that threatened destruction to the Roman state. Lib. xxii. c. 57. And Suetonius informs us, that Augustus had so high an opinion of this religious order, that he consigned the care of his will to six of these vestals.—*Suet. in. vit. Aug.*

gant notion, that this sort of exemplary severities did honour to his reign. Accordingly, in the character of high-priest, or rather, indeed, in that of a lawless and cruel tyrant, he convened the sacred college, not in the pontifical court, where they usually assemble, but at his villa near Alba; and there (by a sentence no less wicked, as it was passed when she was not present to defend herself, than as it was the effect of passion and revenge,) he condemned her of having violated her vestal vow. Yet he himself had been guilty, not only of debauching his brother's daughter, but was also accessary to her death: for that lady, being a widow, in order to conceal her shame, endeavoured to procure an abortion, and, by that means, lost her life. However, the priests were directed to see the sentence immediately executed upon Cornelia. As they were leading her to the place of execution, she implored Vesta, and the rest of the gods, to attest her virtue; and, among other exclamations, frequently cried out, "Is it possible that Cæsar can think me polluted, under the influence of whose sacred functions he has conquered and triumphed?" Whether she said this in flattery or derision; whether it proceeded from a consciousness of her innocence, or contempt of the emperor, is not certain;* but she continued exclaiming in this manner, till she came to the place of execution, to which she was conducted at least like a criminal, though, perhaps, blameless. As she was descending into the subterraneous cavern, her robe hitched

* It was usual with Domitian to triumph, not only without a victory, but even after a defeat.

upon something in the way, and turning back to disengage it, the executioner offered her his hand, which she refused with some horror, as if she could not touch it without impurity. Thus she preserved the appearance of untainted chastity to the concluding scene of her life,

"And her last care was decently to fall."*

Celer, likewise, a Roman knight, who was accused of having had an intrigue with her, during the whole time his sentence† was executing in the square near the senate-house, persisted in saying, "What crime have I committed? I have committed none." These declarations of innocency had exceedingly exasperated Domitian, as imputing to him acts of cruelty and injustice. Accordingly, Licinianus being seized by the emperor's orders for having carried off a freed-woman of Cornelia's, and concealed her at one of his estates, was advised, by the persons who had him in custody, to confess the fact, if he hoped to obtain a remission of his punishment; and he complied with their advice. Herennius Senecio spoke for him in his absence, somewhat in that abrupt manner which Antilochus in Homer‡ relates the death of Patroclus: "Dead is

* Euripides, in his tragedy of Hecuba.

† The punishment inflicted upon the violators of vestal chastity, was, to be scourged to death.

‡ ——————Antilochus appears,
And tells the melancholy tale with tears;
Sad tidings, son of Peleus, thou must hear,
And wretched I, th' unwilling messenger!—
Dead is Patroclus!

POPE, *Iliad*, Lib. XVIII. v. 20.

Patroclus!" "Instead of an advocate," said he, "I must turn informer: Licinianus is fled!" This news was so agreeable to Domitian, that he could not forbear betraying his satisfaction: "Then," says he, "has Licinianus acquitted us of injustice; and we will not urge his punishment to the utmost." He accordingly permitted him to carry off such of his effects as he could secure before they were seized for the use of the public; and, in other respects, softened the sentence of his banishment, as a sort of reward for this voluntary confession. Licinianus was afterwards, by the clemency of the Emperor Nerva, permitted to fix in Sicily, where he now professes rhetoric, and inveighs against the caprices of fortune.

You see how obedient I am to your commands, by sending you a circumstantial detail of foreign as well as domestic news. I imagined, indeed, as you were absent when this transaction happened, you had heard only, in general, that Licinianus was banished upon account of his lewd crimes. For fame usually makes her report in general terms, without relating particular circumstances. I think I deserve, in return, a full account of all that happens in your town, and neighbourhood; for sometimes, no doubt, occurrences arise there worth relating: at all events, however, write any thing you please, provided you send me a letter as long as mine. But I give you notice, I will abate nothing in this demand, and I shall not only number the sides, but even the very lines and syllables. Farewell.

LETTER XII.

TO ARRIANUS.

I KNOW you love Marcellinus, and, indeed, you have frequently mentioned him to me with particular approbation; but he will rise still higher in your esteem, when I inform you of the honourable part he has lately acted. When he went quæstor into one of the provinces, the person to whose lot it fell to attend him as secretary, happening to die before his salary became due, Marcellinus had too much honour to think he had a right of applying the sum, which the public had appointed for that purpose, to his own use. At his return, therefore, he applied to Cæsar; who referred the consideration of what should be done with this money to the senate. It was a question, indeed, of no great importance; however, a question it was. The heirs of the secretary claimed it for themselves; and the commissioners of the treasury for the public. The cause was tried, and counsel on behalf of each party were heard, who spoke extremely well for their respective clients. Cæcilius Strabo was of opinion, that the public had a right to this money; Bæbius Macer thought it legally belonged to the heirs: but it was determined agreeably to the sentiments of the former. You will, I am persuaded, take the first opportunity, as I did, of expressing your approbation to Marcellinus of this conduct; for though, indeed, it is abundantly sufficient, that he has received the applause of the

emperor and the senate, yet the addition of yours will be a very considerable satisfaction to him. Those who are actuated by a sense of fame, are fond of praise, even though it comes from their inferiors; but Marcellinus has so high a respect for you, as to be particularly desirous of approving himself to your judgment. To which let me add, it will increase his satisfaction when he finds, that the fame of this action has travelled so far as to have reached your parts. For I know not how it is, mankind are generally more pleased with an extensive than even a great reputation. Farewell.

LETTER XIII.

TO CORNELIUS TACITUS.

I REJOICE that you are safely arrived in Rome; for though I am always desirous to see you, I am more particularly so now. I purpose to continue a few days longer at my house at Tusculum, in order to finish a work which I have upon my hands; for I am afraid, should I put a stop to this design, now that it is so nearly completed, I shall find it difficult to resume it. In the mean while, that I may lose no time, I send this letter before me to request a favour of you, which I hope shortly to ask in person. But before I inform you what my request is, I must let you into the occasion of it. Being lately at Comum, the place of my nativity, a young lad, son to one of my neighbours, made me a visit. I asked him whether he studied rhetoric, and where? he told me he did, and at Me-

diolanum.* And why not here? "Because," said his father, who came with him, "we have no professors."—"No!" said I; "surely it nearly concerns you, who are fathers," and very opportunely several of the company were, "that your sons should receive their education here, rather than any where else. For, where can they be placed more agreeably than in their own country, or instructed with more safety and less expence than at home, and under the eye of their parents? Upon what very easy terms might you, by a general contribution, procure proper masters, if you would only apply towards the raising a salary for them, the extraordinary expence you sustain for your son's journies, lodgings, and for whatever else you pay in consequence of their being educated at a distance from home; as pay you must, for every article of every kind. Though I have no children myself, yet I shall willingly contribute to a design so beneficial to my native country, which I consider as my child or my parent; and, therefore, I will advance a third part of any sum you should think proper to raise for this purpose. I would take upon myself the whole expence, were I not apprehensive that my benefaction might, hereafter, be abused and perverted to private ends; which I have observed to be the case in several places where public foundations of this nature have been established. The single mean to prevent this mischief is, to leave the choice of the professors entirely in the breast of the parents; who will be so much the more care-

* Milan.

ful whom they elect, as they will be obliged to share the expence of their stipend. For though they may be negligent in disposing of another's bounty, they will certainly be cautious how they apply their own; and will see, that none but those who deserve it shall receive my money, when they must, at the same time, receive theirs too. Let my example then encourage you to unite heartily in this useful design; and be assured, the greater the sum my proportion shall amount to, the more agreeable it will be to me. You can undertake nothing that will be more advantageous to your children, nor more acceptable to your country. Your sons will, by these means, receive their education where they received their birth, and be accustomed, from their infancy, to inhabit and affect their native soil. May you be able to procure professors of such distinguished abilities, that the neighbouring towns shall be glad to draw their learning from hence; and, as you now send your children to foreigners for education, may foreigners, in their turn, flock hither for their instruction!"

I thought proper thus to lay open to you the principles upon which this scheme turns, that you might be the more sensible how agreeable it will be to me, if you undertake the office I request. I entreat you, therefore, with all the earnestness a matter of so much importance deserves, to look out, amongst the great numbers of men of letters, whom the reputation of your genius brings to you, proper persons to whom we may apply for this purpose; but without entering into any agreement with them on my part. For I would leave it en-

tirely free to the parents to judge and choose as they shall see proper: all the share I pretend to claim is, that of contributing my assistance and my money. If, therefore, any one shall be found, who thinks himself qualified for the office, he may repair thither: but without relying upon any thing but his merit. Farewell.

LETTER XIV.

TO PATERNUS.

YOU expect, perhaps, as usual, some grave oration; but I am going to make you a present, as a kind of curiosity, of some of my poetical amusements. You will receive, then, with this letter, a collection of my verses, which I wrote in order to while away an idle hour upon the road, in the bathing room, or between the time of supper. They were composed upon different occasions, as I found myself in a gay, an amorous, a melancholy, or satirical humour; and, accordingly, the style is sometimes of the florid, and sometimes of the concise kind. I endeavoured, by this variety, to hit different tastes; and some things may be found in them, perhaps, of general relish. If you should meet with any passages which may seem somewhat too wantonly expressed, your reading will supply you with my apology, in the example of those great and venerable names who have gone before me in the same kind of writing, who, without scruple, have employed not only the warmest descriptions, but the plainest terms. This, however, is a liber-

ty I have not allowed myself; not as pretending to more severity, (for why should I?) but because, in truth, I have less courage. Nevertheless, I entirely approve of the rule which Catullus lays down for this kind of compositions:

> Let the poet's conduct be
> Free from wanton levity:
> Not so his Muse—her sportive lay
> Pleases most, when most she's gay.

You must look upon it as an instance of the great value I set upon your judgment, that I venture to submit the whole to your examination, rather than select some of the more finished pieces for your approbation. Indeed, in this kind of miscellaneous collections, what would pass well enough if they were viewed separately, lose all their advantage, by appearing in better company. But a sensible and discerning reader ought not to compare pieces of distinct sorts with one another, but examine each performance apart, and if it be perfect in its kind, not condemn it because it does not equal the beauties of some others of a different nature. But I will say nothing more concerning them: for to attempt to excuse or recommend this idle business by a long preface, would be adding one folly to another. I will only, therefore, premise farther, that I design to give these trifles the title of *Hendecasyllables*,* in allusion to the measure in which the verses are composed. Call them, if you think proper, epigrams, eclogues, or (as many others have) sonnets; in a word, give them what name you

* A verse consisting of eleven syllables.

please, I offer them only as *hendecasyllables*. All I beg of your sincerity is, that you would speak your opinion of them to me, with the same freedom that you would to others. When I ask this, I think I lay you under no difficulty. If, indeed, these little poetical essays were my only or chief productions, it might sound, perhaps, a little harsh to advise me, "to turn my mind to something else;" but you may, with great delicacy and politeness, tell me, "I have something else to mind." Farewell.

LETTER XV.

TO FUNDANUS.

IF I can pretend to judgment in any thing, it is undoubtedly in the singular affection which I have for Asinius Rufus. He is a person of the highest merit, and a friend to all good men; in which number, why may I not venture to include myself? He and Tacitus (to whose eminent virtues you are no stranger) are united in the strictest intimacy. If, therefore, you esteem us, you cannot but have the same favourable sentiments of Rufus; for a similitude of manners is, you know, the strongest cement of friendship. He has several children; and in this, as in every thing else, he acts the part of a friend to his country, by supplying it with a numerous race of citizens, which he sees with pleasure extend to a second generation; and this, in an age when even one child is thought a burthen, as it prevents that lucrative adulation which is

usually paid to those who have none.* But he scorns such base views, and thinks himself happy in the title of grandfather; for which he is indebted to Saturius Firmus; a person whom you would esteem as much as I do, if you knew him as well. My design in all this detail, is, to let you see what a numerous family you may oblige by conferring a single favour: a favour for which I apply to you, because I sincerely wish, and assuredly presage, you will soon be in a condition to grant it. I hope and believe you will be consul the approaching year; and, in this persuasion, I am confirmed, both by your own conspicuous merit, and the distinguishing judgment of the emperor. Nonius Bassus, the eldest son of Rufus, solicits

* As luxury prevailed among the Romans, avarice, its sure attendant, increased in proportion; and, among other base methods of satisfying the importunate demands of unbounded desires, the practice of paying court to the wealthy, with a view to their wills, was extremely common. Horace has exposed this contemptible commerce in his usual agreeable manner, and recommends it as the most infallible method of becoming rich:

"*unde*
Divitias ærisque ruam, dic augur, acervos?"
Dixi equidem, et dico: captes astutus ubique
Testamenta senum; neu, si vafer unus et alter
Insidiatorem præroso fugerit hamo,
Aut spem deponas, aut artem, illusus, omittas.
Sat. V. l. 2.

for you know, my friend, prophetic tell,
hall I do, my empty bags to swell?"
aot said it? and I say it still,
ich rich dolt, and slide into his will:
here or there, perhaps, a rogue be found
e to gorge the hook he nibbles round,
ot thy hopes, nor quit, deceived, the game.

the quæstorship at the same time. I know not whether I ought to say, (which, however, the father would have me both say and think, though Bassus is too modest to allow it) that he is a greater man than his father. Were I to represent his abilities, his probity, his learning, his genius, his application, and his parts, as great as you will most certainly find them; you, who never yet suspected my veracity, would scarce conceive he deserved the character. I wish our age so abounded in merit, as to supply you with some who might justly stand in competition with him. In that case, I should be the first to advise you, to consider well where to fix your choice: but the misfortune is—however, I will not speak of my friend in an invidious strain. I will only say he is a young man, who deserves you should look upon him in the same relation as our ancestors used to consider their quæstors,* that is, as your son. Men of your character for wisdom should choose their political children of the same cast they would wish nature to form their real ones. Will it not be an honour to your consulship to have a quæstor whose father has been prætor, and whose relations consuls, yet who, though but a youth, reflects back to his family (and that by their own confession) as much glory as he derives from them? Let me entreat you, then, to comply with my request and my advice. In which, if I seem premature, I hope you will pardon me, when you consider, that in a city where

* The connection between a consul and his quæstor, &c. was considered, by the ancient Romans, as a tie of the strongest kind. *Vid. Cic. in Verrem.*

every thing is seized by the man who can first lay hold of it, it is staying much too late to wait till precisely the proper time: besides, there is a pleasure in anticipating one's wishes. Allow Bassus then to revere you already as consul, and do you, in return, esteem him as your quæstor: and may I, who love you both, enjoy that double pleasure. The truth is, you have each so equal a claim to my affection, that, as I shall be obliged to promote, with all my assiduity and credit, your respective interests in this affair, though they should happen to be distinct; so it will be extremely agreeable if I may be able to serve both those ends at the same time by my good offices to this young man; in a word, if I may be supported in this solicitation by your assistance, to whose judgment and suffrage the senate pays so great a regard. Farewell.

LETTER XVI.

TO VALERIUS PAULINUS.

REJOICE with me, my friend, not only upon my account, but your own, and that of the public; for rhetoric is still held in honour. Being lately engaged to plead in a cause before the centumviri, the crowd was so great that I could not get to my place, without passing through the tribunal where the judges sat. And I have this flattering circumstance to add farther, that a young nobleman having lost his robe in the press, stood in his vest to hear me during the seven hours I was speaking; and my success was equal to the great fatigue I

sustained. Come on then, my friend, and let us earnestly pursue our studies, nor screen our own indolence under pretence of that of the public. Never, we may rest assured, will there be wanting hearers and readers, so long as we can supply them with orators and authors worthy of their attention. Farewell.

LETTER XVII.

TO GALLUS.

YOU acquaint me that Cæcilius, the consul elect, has commenced a suit against Correllia, and earnestly beg me to undertake her cause in her absence. As I have reason to thank you for your information, so I have to complain of your entreaties; without the first, indeed, I should have been ignorant of this affair, but the last was unnecessary, as I want no solicitations to comply, where it would be ungenerous in me to refuse; for can I hesitate a moment to take upon myself the protection of a daughter of Correllius? It is true, indeed, though there is no particular intimacy between her adversary and me, we are, however, upon good terms. It is true, likewise, that he is a person of great rank, and who has a claim to particular regard from me, as he is entering upon an office which I have had the honour to fill; and it is natural for a man to be desirous those dignities should be treated with the highest respect, which he himself once possessed. Yet, these considerations have little weight, when I reflect that it is the daughter

of Correllius whom I am to defend. The memory of that excellent person, than whom this age has not produced a man of greater dignity, rectitude, and good sense, is indelibly impressed upon my mind. I admired him before I was acquainted with him; and, contrary to what is usuall they case, my esteem increased in proportion as I knew him better: indeed, I knew him thoroughly, for he treated me without reserve, and admitted me to share in his joys and his sorrows, in his gay and his serious hours. When I was but a youth, he esteemed, and (I will even venture to say) revered me, as if I had been, in every respect, his equal. When I solicited any post of honour, he supported me with his interest, and recommended me by his testimony; when I obtained it, he was my introducer and my attendant; when I exercised it, he was my guide and my counsellor. In a word, wherever my interest was concerned, he exerted himself with as much zeal and alacrity as if he had possessed all his former health and vigour. In private, in public, and with the emperor, how often has he advanced and supported my credit and interest! It happened once, that the conversation before the emperor Nerva, turned upon the hopeful young men of that time, and several of the company were pleased to mention me with applause; he sat for a little while silent, which gave what he said the greater weight; and then, with that air of dignity to which you are no stranger, "I must be reserved," said he, "in my praises of Pliny, because he does nothing without my advice." By which single sentence he gave me a

greater character than I could presume even to aspire to; as he represented my conduct to be always such as wisdom must approve, since it was wholly under the guidance of one of the wisest of men. Even in his last moments, he said to his daughter, (as she often mentions,) "I have, in the course of a long life, raised up many friends to you; but there is none in whom you may more assuredly confide, than Pliny and Cornutus:" a circumstance I cannot reflect upon, without being deeply sensible how much it is incumbent upon me, to endeavour so act up to the opinion so excellent a judge of mankind conceived of me; I shall, therefore, most readily give my assistance to Correllia in this affair, and willingly hazard any displeasure I may incur by appearing in her cause. Though I should imagine, if, in the course of my pleadings, I should find an opportunity to explain and enforce, more at large than I can in a letter, the reasons I have here mentioned, and upon which I rest at once my apology and my glory; her adversary (whose suit may, perhaps, as you say, be entirely unprecedented, as it is against a woman,)* will not only excuse, but approve my conduct. Farewell.

* Alluding, perhaps, to some legal privilege attached to the sex by the jurisprudence of ancient Rome.

LETTER XVIII.

TO ANTONINUS.

CAN I give you a stronger instance how much I admire your Greek epigrams, than by having endeavoured to imitate some of them in a Latin translation? I confess, however, (partly from the weakness, or, as Lucretius calls it, *the poverty*, of our native language) much to their disadvantage; yet, if clothed in a Roman dress, and by my unskilful hand, you should be able to discover some beauty still remaining in them; what must their charms be, when adorned with all the majesty of the Greek language, and formed by your superior genius! Farewell.

LETTER XIX.

TO HISPULLA.

AS you are an exemplary instance of tender regard to your family in general, and to your late excellent brother in particular, whose affection you returned with equal warmth; and have not only shewn the kindness of an aunt, but supplied the loss of a tender parent to his daughter;* you will hear, I am persuaded, with the greatest pleasure, that she behaves worthy of her father, her grandfather, and yourself. She possesses an excellent understanding, together with consummate prudence,

* Calphurnia, Pliny's wife.

and gives the strongest testimony of the purity of her heart, by her fondness of her husband. Her affection to me has given her a turn to books ; and my compositions, which she takes a pleasure in reading, and even in getting by heart, are continually in her hands. How full of tender solicitude is she, when I am going to speak in any cause ? How kindly does she rejoice, when I have happily discharged the office ? While I am pleading, she places persons to inform her, from time to time, how I am heard, what applauses I receive, and what success attends the cause. When, at any time, I recite my works, she conceals herself behind some curtain, and, with secret rapture, enjoys my praises. She sings my verses to her lyre, with no other master but Love, the best instructor, for her guide. From these happy circumstances, I derive my most assured hopes, that the harmony between us will increase with our days, and be as lasting as our lives. For it is not my youth or my person, which time gradually impairs ; it is my character, and my glory, of which she is enamoured. But what less could be expected, from one who was trained by your hands, and formed by your instructions ; who was early familiarized, under your roof, with all that is worthy and amiable, and was first taught to conceive an affection for me, by the advantageous colours in which you were pleased to represent me ? As you revered my mother with all the respect due even to a parent, so you kindly directed and encouraged my tender years ; presaging, from that early period, all that my wife now fondly imagines

I really am. Accept, therefore, of our united thanks, that you thus, as it were designedly, formed us for each other. Farewell.

LETTER XX.

TO MAXIMUS.

I HAVE already acquainted you with my opinion of the several parts of your work, as I perused them; I must now tell you my general thoughts of the whole. It is a beautiful performance; the sentiments are manly and sublime, conceived in all the variety of a strong and pregnant imagination, expressed in chaste and elegant language; the figures happily chosen, and a copious vein of eloquence runs through the whole, and raises a very high idea of the author's talents. You seem impelled by the energy of a powerful genius, actuated by deep sorrow, mutually assisting and animating each other; for your genius gives majesty to your grief, and your grief adds strength to your genius. Farewell.

LETTER XXI.

TO VELIUS CEREALIS.

HOW severe a fate has attended the daughters of Helvidius! these two sisters are both dead in childbed, after having each of them been delivered of a girl. This misfortune pierces me with the sharpest sorrow; as, indeed, to see two such amiable young women fall a sacrifice to their fruitful-

ness, in the prime and flower of their years, is a misfortune which I cannot too deeply lament. I lament for the unhappy condition of the poor infants, who are thus become orphans from their birth; I lament, for the sake of the disconsolate husbands of these ladies; and I lament, too, for my own. The affection I bear to the memory of their late father is inviolable, as my defence* of him in the senate, and as all my writings witness. Of three children, which survived him, there remains but one; and his family, which had lately so many noble supports, now rests upon a single person! It will, however, be a considerable mitigation of my affliction, if fortune should, at least, kindly spare *him*, and render him worthy of his father and grandfather:† and I am so much the more anxious for his welfare and good conduct, as he is the only branch of the family remaining. You know the softness and solicitude of my heart, where I have any tender attachments; you will not wonder, then, that I have many fears, where I have many hopes. Farewell.

* See Book IX. Let. 13.

† The famous Helvidius Priscus, who signalized himself in the senate, by the freedom of his speeches in favour of liberty, during the reigns of Galba, Otho, Vitellius, and Vespasian. In the reign of the latter he was put to death, by the order of the senate, though contrary to the inclination of the emperor, who countermanded the execution; but it was too late, the executioner having performed his office before the messenger arrived. Tacitus represents him as acting, in all the various duties of social li with one consistent tenor of uniform virtue; superior to all temptations of wealth, of inflexible integrity, and unbroken fortitude.—*Hist.* Lib. 4. 5.

LETTER XXII.

TO RUFUS.

I LATELY attended our excellent emperor* as one of his assessors, in a cause wherein he himself presided. A certain person left by his will, a fund for the establishment of the gymnastic games† at Vienna.‡ These, my worthy friend Trebonius Rufinus, when he exercised the office of Duumvir,§ had ordered to be totally abolished; and it was now alledged against him, that he had no authority for suppressing them. He spoke in his own cause with a success equal to his great eloquence; and what particularly recommended his speech was, that he delivered it with a certain suitable boldness becoming a true Roman and a good citizen, rising up in his own justification. When the sentiments of the assessors were taken, Junius Mauricus (who, in spirit and integrity, has no superior) declared his opinion, that the liberty of solemnizing these games should not be restored to the people of Vienna;

* Trajan.

† So called, because the persons who performed in these games were naked. They consisted principally of running, wrestling, and boxing.

‡ Vienna in Dauphiné, a province in France.

§ The Duumviri, so called from their number being only two, were magistrates in the corporate cities, who exercised, in their respective corporations, the same functions as the consuls at Rome; they were chosen out of the body of decuriones, who were a kind of senators.—SIGONIUS *de jure Ital.* lib. 3. 4.

"and, would to God," added he, "they could be abolished at Rome too!" This, you will say, was an instance of great firmness;* but it is nothing uncommon in Mauricus. He gave as strong a proof of his honest freedom, before the late emperor Nerva. Being at supper one evening with that prince, and a few select friends, Vejento† was placed next to the emperor: After I have named the man, I need say no more to raise your indignation. The discourse happened to turn upon Catullus Messalinus, who had a soul as dark as his body; for he was not only cursed with want of sight, but want of humanity. As he was uninfluenced either by fear, shame, or compassion, he proved a very proper instrument, in the hand of Domitian, to execute his black purposes against every man of worth. The company gave their sentiments of the sanguinary counsels and infamous characters of this man. "And what," said the emperor, "would have been his fate had he lived now?" "To have supped with us," replied Mauricus. But to return from this long digression, into which, however, I did not fall undesignedly: it was determined that these games should be suppressed; for they had greatly depraved the morals of the people of Vienna; and they have had the same general effect among us. But the vices of the Viennenses are confined within their own walls; ours have a more extensive influence: for it is in the body-politic, as in the nat-

* Trajan was fond of this kind of entertainments, and had himself exhibited some very splendid ones, upon his triumph over the Dacians.

† An infamous sycophant, frequently mentioned by Juvenal.

ural, those disorders are most dangerous that flow from the head. Farewell.

LETTER XXIII.

TO POMPONIUS BASSUS.

I HAD the great pleasure to hear from our common friends, that you dispose of your time in your agreeable retirement from public business, with that dignity which becomes a man of your distinguished wisdom; that you mix the exercises of riding or sailing with contemplation, and learned conferences with much reading; in a word, that you are daily increasing that fund of knowledge you already possess. This is to grow old in a way worthy of a man who has discharged the highest offices both civil and military, and who gave himself wholly up to the service of the commonwealth, whilst it became his years. Our youth and manhood we owe to our country, but our declining age is due to ourselves; as the laws themselves seem to suggest, which resign us to ease, when we are arrived beyond our 60th year.* How do I long for the time when I shall enjoy that happy privilege! When my years shall justify my following the example of your honourable retreat! When my retiring from active life shall not be deemed indolence, but repose! Farewell.

* A senator was not obliged to attend the business of the house after that age.—SENECA *de Civ. vit.* c. 20.

LETTER XXIV.

TO VALENS.

BEING engaged lately in a cause before the centumviri, it occurred to me, that, when I was a young man, I had also pleaded in the same court. I could not forbear, as usual, to pursue the reflection, and to consider if there were any of those advocates then present, who were joined with me in the former cause; but I found I was the only person remaining, who had been counsel in both; such changes does the instability of human nature, or the vicissitudes of fortune produce! Death had removed some; banishment others; age and infirmities had silenced *those*, while *these* were withdrawn to enjoy the happiness of retirement; *one* was at the head of an army; and the indulgence of the prince has exempted *another* from the burthen of civil employments. What turns of fortune have I experienced even in my own person! It was the cultivation of my talents for oratory, that first raised me into notice; it was the same talents that afterwards occasioned my disgrace; and it is the same talents that have advanced me again. The friendships of the wise and good, at my first appearance in the world, were highly serviceable to me; the same friendships afterward proved extremely prejudicial to my interest; and *now*, they are my ornament and support. If you compute the time in which these revolutions have happened, it is but a few years; if you number the incidents, it seems an

age: and it is a lesson that will teach us to check both our despair and our presumption, when we observe such a variety of events rapidly revolving in so narrow a circle. It is my custom, to communicate to my friend all my thoughts, and to set before him the same reflections and examples by which I regulate my own conduct: and such is the purpose of the present letter. Farewell.

LETTER XXV.

TO MAXIMUS.

I MENTIONED to you, in a former letter,* that I apprehended the method of voting by ballots would be attended with inconveneinces; and so it has proved. At the last election of magistrates, upon some of the tablets were written several pieces of pleasantry, and even indecencies; in one, particularly, instead of the name of the candidate, was inserted the names of those who espoused his interest. The senate was extremely exasperated at this insolence; and, with one voice, threatened the vengeance of the emperor upon the author: but he lay concealed, and possibly might be in the number of those who expressed the warmest indignation. What must one think of such a man's private conduct, who, in public, upon so important an affair, and at so solemn a time, could indulge himself in such indecent liberties, and dare to act the droll in the face of the senate? *Who will know it*, is the argu-

* Book III. Let. 20.

ment that prompts little and base minds to commit these indecorums. Secure from being discovered by others, and unawed by any self-respect, they take their pencil and tablets; and hence arise these buffooneries, which are fit only for the stage. What method shall we take, what remedy apply, against this abuse? Our disorders, indeed, in general, have every where eluded all attempts to restrain them. But these are evils much too deeply rooted for our limited power to eradicate, and must be left to the care of that superior authority, who, by these low, but daring insults, has daily fresh occasions of exerting all his pains and vigilance. Farewell.

LETTER XXVI.

TO NEPOS.

THE request you make me to revise and correct that copy of my works which you have taken the pains to collect, I shall most willingly comply with; as, indeed, there is nothing I ought to perform with more readiness, especially at your instance. When a man of such dignity, literature, and eloquence, deeply engaged in business, and entering upon the important government of a province, has so good an opinion of my compositions, as to think them worth taking with him, how am I obliged to endeavour, that this part of his baggage may not seem an useless embarrassment! My first care, therefore, shall be, that they may attend you with all the advantages possible; and my next, to supply you, at your return, with others, which you may not

think undeserving to be added to the former; for I can have no stronger encouragement to increase the number of my writings, than the being assured of finding a reader of your taste and discernment. Farewell.

LETTER XXVII.

TO FALCO.

I HAVE been attending, these three days, the recital of Augurinus's sonnets, which I heard not only with great pleasure, but even admiration. They are conceived with much delicacy of sentiment, are expressed with great elegance, and abound with numberless strokes of the tender and the sublime, of wit and of satire. I am of opinion, there has not, for these many years, appeared any thing more finished of the kind; if, indeed, my great affection for him, and the praises he bestows upon me, do not bias my judgment. He introduces his poems with observing, that I sometimes amuse myself with writing verses. If I can recollect the second line of this introduction, (for the rest I remember, and have often repeated,) you shall judge if my opinion of them is just:

Sweetly flow my tender lays,
Like Calvus' or Catullus' strains,
(Bards approved of ancient days!)
Where love in all its softness reigns.

Yet wherefore ancient poets name?
Let Pliny my example be:
Him the sacred nine inflame;
More than ancient poets he!

To mutual love he tunes the lay,
While far the noisy bar he flies:
Say then ye grave, ye formal, say,
Who shall gentle love despise?

You see with what sprightliness of imagination, what propriety of sentiment, what clearness of expression, the whole is wrought up; and in this taste, I will venture to assure you, you will find his performance in general: I will send it to you as soon as it shall be published. In the mean while, admit this excellent youth into a share of your affection, and congratulate our age on the production of such a genius, whose virtues render him still more illustrious. He spends his time partly with Spurinna, and partly with Antoninus, having the honour to be the relation of one and the companion of both. You will easily imagine what uncommon virtues he must possess, who is thus the favourite of two such venerable old men: for the poet's observation is most undoubtedly true:

Those who in close society are joined,
In manners equal you will ever find;*

Farewell.

LETTER XXVIII.

TO SEVERUS.

HERENIUS SEVERUS, a person of distinguished erudition, is exceedingly desirous to have the pictures of two of your countrymen, Cornelius

* Euripides.

Nepos, and Titus Cassius, to adorn his library; and has entreated me, if they are to be met with, where you are, (as probably they may,) that I would procure copies for him. That care I recommend to you, rather than to any other, not only because I know your friendship for me readily inclines you to comply with my requests, but as being sensible of the high regard you have for learning and all her friends; and that your affection and veneration for those who have proved an ornament to your country, is equal to that which you bear towards your country herself. I beg you, therefore, to employ some skilful hand in this work; for if it is difficult to catch a likeness from the life, it is much more so to preserve it in a copy; from which I desire you will not suffer the painter to deviate, for even the better. Farewell.

LETTER XXIX.

TO ROMANUS.

INDEED, my friend, you must, at all rates, take your place upon the bench the next time the court sits. In vain would your indolence repose itself under my protection; for there is no absenting with impunity. Behold that severe prætor, the resolute Licinius Nepos, fining even a mighty senator for the same neglect! the senator pleaded his cause in person, but pleaded in suppliant tone. The fine, 'tis true, was remitted; but sore was his dismay, but humble his intercessions, but sad his necessity of being obliged to ask pardon. All magis-

trates in that office, you will tell me, perhaps, are not thus rigid. You may, however, be mistaken; for though, indeed, to be the author and reviver of an example of this kind, may be an act of severity; yet, when once it is introduced, even lenity herself may follow the precedent. Farewell.

LETTER XXX.

TO LICINIUS.

I HAVE brought you, as a present out of the country, a query which well deserves the consideration of your extensive knowledge. There is a spring which rises in a neighbouring mountain, and, running among the rocks, is received into a little banquetting-room, from whence, after the force of its current is a little restrained, it falls into the Larian Lake.* The nature of this spring is extremely surprising; it ebbs and flows regularly three times a-day. The increase and decrease is plainly visible, and very amusing to observe. You sit down by the side of the fountain, and, whilst you are taking a repast, and drinking its water, which is extremely cool, you see it gradually rise and fall. If you place a ring, or any thing else, at the bottom, when it is dry, the stream reaches it by degrees, till it is entirely covered, and then gently retires; and, if you wait, you may see it thus alternately advance and recede three successive times. Shall we say that some secret current of air stops and opens the fountain-head, as it approaches to or re-

* See B. 1. Let. 3. note.

tires from it, as we see in bottles, and other vessels of that nature, where there is not a free and open passage, though you turn their necks downwards, yet the outward air obstructing the vent, they discharge their contents as it were by starts? Or may it not be accounted for upon the same principle as the flux and reflux of the sea? or as those rivers which discharge themselves into the sea, meeting with contrary winds and the swell of the ocean, are forced back into their channels; so may there not be something that checks this fountain, for a time, in its progress? Or is there rather a certain reservoir that contains these waters in the bowels of the earth, which, while it is recruiting its discharges, the stream flows more slowly, and in less quantity; but when it has collected its due measure, it runs again in its usual strength and fulness? Or, lastly, is there I know not what kind of subterraneous counterpoise, that throws up the water when the fountain is dry, and stops it when it is full? You, who are so well qualified for the enquiry, will examine the reasons* of this won-

* There are several of these periodical fountains in different parts of the world, as we have some in England. *Laywell*, near Torbay, is mentioned, in the Philosophical Transactions, No. 104. p. 909. to ebb and flow several times every hour. The reasons of this kind of springs are of no very easy solution, and the causes assigned by modern philosophers are scarce more satisfactory than those pointed out by the ancients: perhaps they do not depend upon any general principle, but arise from different causes, according to their respective situations. The conjecture which Mr. Addison offers, in accounting for those he saw in Switzerland, seems plausible, and equally applicable to this fountain mentioned by Pliny; as it is probable it took its rise from the same mountains. "We saw," says that inimitable author, in his description of Ge-

derful phenomenon; it will be sufficient for me if I have given you a clear description of it. Farewell.

neva and the lake, "in several parts of the Alps that bordered upon us, vast pits of snow; as several mountains, that lie at a greater distance, are wholly covered with it. I fancied the confusion of mountains and hollows I here observed, furnished me with a more probable reason than any I have met with, for these periodical fountains in Switzerland, which flow only at particular hours of the day. For as the tops of these mountains cast their shadows upon one another, they hinder the sun's shining on several parts, at such certain times, so that there are several heaps of snow which have the sun lying upon them for two or three hours together, and are in the shade all the day afterward. If, therefore, it happens, that any particular fountain takes its rise from any of these reservoirs of snow, it will naturally begin to flow on such hours of the day as the snow begins to melt: but as soon as the sun leaves it again to freeze and harden, the fountain dries up, and receives no more supplies till about the same time the next day, when the heat of the sun again sets the snows a running, that fall into the same little conduits, traces, and canals, and by consequence break out, and discover themselves always in the same place." ADDISON'S *Travels*, 353.

THE LETTERS OF PLINY.

BOOK FIFTH.

LETTER I.

TO SEVERUS.

A SMALL legacy, which was lately left me, has given me much greater pleasure than I should have received by a far more considerable bequest, unattended with similar circumstances. Pomponia Gratilla, having disinherited her son, Assidius Curianus, appointed me, and Sertorius Severus, of prætorian rank, together with several eminent Roman knights, her co-heirs. The son applied to me to give him my share of the inheritance, in order to make use of my name, as an example to the rest of the joint-heirs; but offered, at the same time, to enter into a secret agreement with me to return my proportion. I told him, it was by no means agreeable to my character, to seem to act one way, when, in truth, I was acting another; and that there was something of meanness in making presents to a man of his fortune, who had no children; besides, it would not at all answer the purpose at

which he was aiming. Indeed, (I added) if I were to withdraw my claim, it might be of some service to him; and this I was ready and willing to do, if he could prove to me that he was unjustly disinherited.—"Let me prevail with you, then," said he, "to be my arbitrator in this case." After a short pause, I told him I consented to his proposal; "for why," said I, "should I not have as good an opinion of my own impartial disinterestedness, as you seem to have? But remember I am not to be prevailed upon to decide the point in question against your mother, if it should appear she had just reason for what she has done."—"Be it agreeable to your inclination," he replied, "which I am sure is always to act according to justice." I called to my assistance Corellius and Frontinus, two of the most considerable lawyers which Rome at that time afforded. Attended with those friends, I heard the cause in my chamber. Curianus said every thing which he thought could favour his pretensions, to whom (as there was nobody but myself to defend the character of Gratilla) I made a short reply; after which I retired with my friends to deliberate upon the case; and then returning, acquainted Curianus that it was our opinion his conduct had justly drawn upon him his mother's displeasure. Some time afterwards, Curianus commenced a suit in the *Centumviral* court against all the co-heirs except myself. The day appointed for the trial approaching, the rest of the co-heirs were desirous of compromising the affair; not out of any diffidence of their cause, but from a distrust of the times. They were apprehensive that what

had been the case of many others might happen to them, and, from a civil suit, it might end in a criminal one; as there were some amongst them to whom the friendship of Gratilla and Rusticus* might prove extremely prejudicial: they, therefore, desired me to talk with Curianus. Accordingly I had conference with him in the temple of *Concord*.—"Suppose," said I, "your mother had left you the fourth part of her estate, or even suppose she had made you sole heir, but had exhausted so much of the estate in legacies, that there would not be more than a fourth part remaining to you, could you justly have complained? you ought to be contented, therefore, if, being absoluteiy disinherited, as you are, the heirs are willing to relinquish to you a fourth part; which, however, I will increase, by contributing my proportion. You know you did not commence any suit against me; so that the prescription which I have gained by two years peaceable possession, secures my share from any claim you can set up against it. But, to induce you to agree to the proposals on the part of the other co-heirs, and that you may be no sufferer by the peculiar respect you shew to me, I offer to advance my proportion with them."

The silent satisfaction of my own conscience is not the only pleasure this concession has afforded me; it has contributed also to the honour of my character. For it is the same Curianus who has left

* Gratilla was the wife of Rusticus: Rusticus was put to death by Domitian, and Gratilla banished. It was a sufficient crime in the reign of that execrable prince to be even a friend of those who were obnoxious to him. See B. 7. let. 33. last note.

me the legacy I mentioned in the beginning of my letter; and I received it as a very distinguishing mark, if I do not flatter myself, of his approbation of my conduct. I have given you this detail, because, in all my joys and sorrows, I look upon you as myself, and I thought it would be unkind not to communicate to so tender a friend whatever occasions me a sensible gratification; as I confess this circumstance has proved: for I do not pretend to such refined strains of philosophy, as to be indifferent, when I think I have acted as becomes a man of probity, whether my actions meet with that approbation which is in some sort their reward. Farewell.

LETTER II.

TO FLACCUS.

THE thrushes* I received from you were so excellent, that my Laurentinum is not capable of supplying me with any thing in this tempestuous season, either of the land or sea kind, to make you a suitable return. I have only, therefore, to send you the ineffectual acknowledgments of a barren letter: an exchange more unequal, I confess, than that famous one of the subtle Diomed.† But your

* These birds, of which there are several sorts, were in high reputation among the Romans, and generally had a place upon all elegant tables.

† Alluding to the story in Hom. Iliad, where Glaucus and Diomed having an interview between the two armies, they discovered that a connexion of friendship and hospitality had formerly subsisted be-

good-nature will so much the more readily grant this idle epistle a pardon, as it confessedly does not deserve one. Farewell.

LETTER III.

TO ARISTO.

AMONG the many agreeable and obliging instances I have received of your friendship, your not concealing from me the long conversation which lately passed at your house concerning my verses, and the various judgments pronounced upon them, is by no means the least. There were some of the company, it seems, who did not disapprove my little poems, but, at the same time, censured me in a free and friendly manner, for employing myself in composing and reciting them. I am so far, however, from desiring to extenuate the charge, that I willingly acknowledge myself still more deserving

tween their families. Accordingly, Diomed proposes an exchange of their arms, as a token of reciprocal amity.

Τευχεα δ' αλληλοις επαμειψομεν· οφρα ϗ οιδε
Γνωσιν, οτι, &c.——Lib. 6. v. 230.

Now change we arms, and prove to either host,
We guard the friendship of the line we boast.
Thus having said——
Their hands they join, their mutual faith they plight.
Brave Glaucus then each narrow thought resigned,
(Jove warmed his bosom and enlarged his mind)
For Diomed's brass arms of mean device;
For which nine oxen paid (a vulgar price)
He gave his own of gold divinely wrought;
An hundred beeves the shining purchase bought. POPE.

of it; and confess that I sometimes amuse myself with writing verses of the ludicrous and gayer kind. I compose comedies; divert myself with pantomimes; read the lyric poets; and enter into the spirit of the most wanton Muse; in short, I am nothing averse from pleasantry, mirth, and gaiety; or, to sum up every kind of innocent amusement in one word, *I am a man.* I am not at all displeased, that those who are ignorant that the most learned, the wisest, and the best of men have amused themselves in the same way, should be surprised at me: but those who know what noble examples I follow, will allow me, I trust, thus to err with those whom it is an honour to imitate, not only in their most serious occupations, but lightest amusements. Is it unbecoming *me* (I will not name any living example, lest I should seem to flatter) but is it unbecoming me to practice what became Tully, Calvus, Pollio, Messala, Hortensius, Brutus, Sulla, Catulus, Scævola, Sulpitius, Varro, the Torquati, Memmius, Getulicus, Seneca, Lucceius, and in our own memory, Virginius Rufus? But if the examples of private men are not sufficient to justify me, I can cite Julius Cæsar, Augustus, Nerva, and Titus. I forbear to add Nero to the catalogue; though I am sensible what is sometimes practised by the worst of men, does not, therefore, degenerate into wrong; on the contrary, it still maintains its credit, if frequently countenanced by the best. In that number Virgil, Cornelius Nepos, and, prior to these, Ennius and Accius, justly deserve the most distinguished place. These last, indeed, were not senators; but propriety of conduct knows no distinc-

tion of rank or title. I recite my works, it is true, and, in this instance, I am not sure I can justify myself by their examples. They, perhaps, might be satisfied with their own judgment: but I have too humble an opinion of mine, to suppose my compositions sufficiently perfect, because they appear so to my own mind. My reasons then for reciting are, that there is a certain reverence for one's audience, which fires the imagination, and excites a more vigorous application; and that I have, by these means, an opportunity of settling any doubts I may have concerning my performance, by observing the general sentiments of my auditors. In a word, I have the advantage of receiving different hints from different persons: and though they should not declare their opinions in express terms, yet the air of a countenance, the turn of a head or eye, the motion of a hand, a whisper, or even silence itself, will easily distinguish their real sentiments from the language of civility. Accordingly, if any one of my audience should have the curiosity to peruse the same performance which he heard me read, he may find several things altered or omitted, and, perhaps too, upon *his* particular judgment, though he did not say a single word to me. But I am defending my conduct in this particular, as if I had actually recited my works in public, and not in my own house before a select party of my friends; a numerous appearance of whom has, upon many occasions, been held an honour, but never surely a reproach. Farewell.

LETTER IV.

TO VALERIANUS.

THE fact which I am going to mention, though in itself of no great importance, may be attended with very considerable consequences. Sollers, a person of prætorian rank, petitioned the senate for leave to hold a fair upon his estate. He was opposed in this by the deputies from the Vicentini,* who employed Tuscillinus Nominatus as their counsel. The cause was adjourned; and at the next meeting the deputies appeared unattended with their counsel, complaining that they had been *grossly deceived:* an expression, which whether it dropped from them in the warmth of resentment, or that they really had reason to think so, I will not determine. Nepos, the prætor, asked them whom it was they had retained? They replied, the same person who was counsel for them in the former instance. Being further asked, whether he then appeared for them without any gratuity? They replied, that they had given him six thousand sesterces,† and afterwards presented him with a second fee of one thousand denarii.‡ Upon which, Nepos moved that Nominatus should be ordered to attend: and this is all that was done in the affair that day. But, unless I am greatly mistaken, the enquiry will not

* Of Vicenza, a city in the territories of Venice.

† About 48l. of our money.

‡ About 30l. of our money.

end there ; for one may observe in several instances, that the slightest sparks have lighted up a long train of very unexpected consequences. And now I have sufficiently raised your curiosity, I suppose to make you desirous I should inform you of the rest ; unless, perhaps, you should choose to gratify it by coming to Rome, and had rather see than read the sequel. Farewell.

LETTER V.

TO MAXIMUS.

I AM deeply afflicted with the news I have received of the death of Fannius, not only as having lost in him a friend whose eloquence and polite manners I admired, but a guide also, by whose judgment I was often directed ; as, indeed, he possessed a most penetrating genius, improved and enlighted by great experience. There are some circumstances attending his death, which aggravate my concern : he left behind him a will which had been made a considerable time before his decease, by which it happens that his estate is fallen into the hands of those who had incurred his displeasure, whilst his greatest favourites are excluded. But what I particularly regret, is, that he has left unfinished, a very noble work in which he was engaged. Notwithstanding his full employment at the bar, he had commenced a history of those persons who were put to death or banished by Nero ; and had completed three books. They are written with great elegance and precision ; the style is

pure, and preserves a proper medium between the simple narrative and the historical: and as they were very favourably received by the public, he was the more desirous of being able to finish the remainder. The hand of death is ever, in my opinion, too severe and too sudden, when it falls upon such as are employed in some immortal work. The sons of sensuality, who have no views beyond the present hour, terminate with each day the whole purpose of their existence; but those who look forward to posterity, and endeavour to transmit their names with honour to future generations, by useful labours;—to such, death is always immature, as it ever snatches them from amidst some unfinished design. Fannius, long before his death, had a strong presentiment of what has happened: he dreamed one night, that, as he was sitting in his study with his manuscript before him, Nero entered, and, placing himself by his side, took up the three first books of this history; which he read through, and then departed. This dream greatly alarmed him, and he looked upon it as an intimation that he should not carry on this history any farther than Nero had read, and so the event has proved. I cannot reflect upon this accident, without lamenting that he was prevented from accomplishing a work, which had cost him so many painful vigils, as it suggests to me, at the same time, reflections on my own mortality, and the fate of my writings: and I am persuaded the same apprehensions alarm you for those in which you are at present employed. Let us then, my friend, while yet

we live, exert all our endeavours, that death, whenever it shall arrive, may find as little as possible to destroy. Farewell.

LETTER VI.

TO APOLLINARIS.

THE kind concern you expressed when you heard of my design to pass the summer at my villa* in Tuscany, and your obliging endeavours to dissuade me from going to a place which you think unhealthy, are extremely pleasing to me. I confess, the atmosphere of that part of Tuscany, which lies towards the coast, is thick and unwholesome: but my house is situated at a great distance from the sea, under one of the *Apennine* mountains, which, of all others, is most esteemed for the clearness of its air. But that you may be relieved

* This was Pliny's principal seat, lying about one hundred and fifty miles from Rome, and in which he usually resided during the summer season. The reader will observe, therefore, that he considers it in a very different manner from that of Laurentinum, (his winter villa) both with respect to the situation and the house itself. *Cluver*, in his geography, has placed this villa a little above *Tifernum Tiberinum*, now called *Citta di Castello*, where our author built a temple at his own expence. This has given room to imagine that, possibly, there may be yet some remaining traces of this house to be discovered in Tuscany, near a town, which the Italians call *Stintignano*, in the neighbourhood of *Ponte di San Stefano*, about ten miles north of an episcopal city now called *Borgo di San Sepulchro*. (Plans per Felibien, p. 65.) If, after having traversed this noble villa, the reader should be curious to know how Pliny disposed of his time, when he retired to it, he may turn to the 36th letter of the 9th book.

from all apprehensions on my account, I will give you a description of the temperature of the climate, the situation of the country, and the beauty of my villa, which I am persuaded you will read with as much pleasure as I shall relate. The winters are severe and cold, so that myrtles, olives, and trees of that kind which delight in constant warmth, will not flourish here; but it produces bay-trees* in great perfection; yet, sometimes, though, indeed, not oftener than in the neighbourhood of Rome, they are killed by the severity of the seasons. The summers are exceedingly temperate, and continually attended with refreshing breezes, which are seldom interrupted by high winds. If you were to come here and see the numbers of old men who have lived to be grand-fathers and great grand-fathers, and hear the stories they can

* In the original it is *laurus*, which the ingenious Mr. Martyn, professor of botany in Cambridge, has given very strong reasons for believing is not the same tree with our laurel, but the bay-tree. "Our laurel, (that author observes) "was hardly known in Europe till the latter end of the 16th century; about which time it seems to have been brought from Trebizond to Constantinople, and from thence into most parts of Europe. The laurel has no fine smell, which is a property ascribed to the *laurus*, by Virgil in the second eclogue:

Et vos, o lauri, carpam, et te proxime, myrte,
Sic positæ, quoniam suaves *miscetis* odores.

And in the 6th Æneid;

Odoratum *lauri nemus*.

Nor is the laurel remarkable for crackling in the fire, of which there is abundant mention with regard to the *laurus*. These characters agree very well with the bay-tree, which seems to be most certainly the *laurus* of the ancients; and is, at this time, frequent in the woods and hedges of Italy." Notes upon Georg. 1. v. 306.

entertain you with of their ancestors, you would fancy yourself born in some former age. The disposition of the country is the most beautiful that can be imagined. Figure to yourself an immense amphitheatre; but such as the hand of nature could only form. Before you lies a vast extended plain, bounded by a range of mountains, whose summits are covered with lofty and venerable woods, which supply variety of game: from thence, as the mountains decline, they are adorned with under-woods. Intermixed with these, are little hills of so strong and fat a soil, that it would be difficult to find a single stone upon them; their fertility is nothing inferior to the lowest grounds; and though their harvest, indeed, is somewhat later, their crops are as well matured. At the foot of these hills the eye is presented, wherever it turns, with one unbroken view of numberless vineyards, terminated by a border, as it were, of shrubs.—From thence you have a prospect of the adjoining fields and meadows below. The soil of the former is so extremely stiff, and, upon the first ploughing, turns up in such vast clods, that it is necessary to go over it nine several times, with the largest oxen and the strongest ploughs, before they can be thoroughly broken; whilst the enamelled meadows produce trefoil, and other kinds of herbage, as fine and tender as if it were but just sprung up, being continually refreshed by never-failing rills. But though the country abounds with great plenty of water, there are no marshes; for, as it lies upon a rising ground, whatever water it receives without absorbing, runs off into the Tiber.

This river, which winds through he middle of the meadows, is navigable only in the winter and spring, at which seasons it transports the produce of the lands to Rome; but its channel is so extremely low in summer, that it scarcely deserves the name of a river; towards the autumn, however, it begins again to renew its claim to that title.—You could not be more agreeably entertained, than by taking a view of the face of this country from the top of one of our neighbouring mountains: you would suppose that not a real, but some imaginary landscape, painted by the most exquisite pencil, lay before you: such an harmonious variety of beautiful objects meets the eye, which way soever it turns. My villa is so advantageously situated, that it commands a full view of all the country round; yet you approach it by so sensible a rise, that you find yourself upon an eminence, without perceiving you ascended. Behind, but at a great distance, stand the Apennine mountains. In the calmest days we are refreshed by the winds that blow from thence, but so spent, as it were, by the long tract of land they travel over, that they are entirely divested of all their strength and violence before they reach us. The exposition of the principal front of the house is full south, and seems to invite the afternoon sun in summer (but somewhat earlier in winter) into a spacious and well-proportioned portico, consisting of several members, particularly a porch built in the ancient manner. In the front of the portico is a sort of terrace, embellished with various figures, and bounded with a box hedge, from whence you descend by an easy slope, adorned with the repre-

sentation of divers animals, in box, answering alternately to each other, into a lawn overspread with the soft, I had almost said the liquid, Acanthus:* this is surrounded by a walk† enclosed with tonsile ever-greens, shaped into a variety of forms. Beyond it is the Gestatio, laid out in the form of a circus,‡ ornamented in the middle with box cut in numberless different figures, together with a plantation of shrubs, prevented by the sheers from shooting up too high: the whole is fenced in with a wall covered by box, rising by different ranges to the top. On the outside of the wall lies a meadow, that owes as many beauties to nature, as all I have been describing *within* does to art; at the end of which are several other meadows and

* Sir William Temple supposes the *Acanthus* of the ancients to be what we call *Pericanthe*. Modern botanists term it garden *bears-foot*; (See Martyn on Georg. 4. v. 123.) but Mr. Castel, in his observations upon this passage, with more probability, imagines, by its character here, that it resembles moss. See note, p. 243.

† This walk is called in the original *Ambulatio*, as what I have ventured to translate a *Terrace*, is by Pliny termed *Xystus*: The *Ambulatio* seems to be what we properly call a walk; the *Gestatio* was a place appropriated to the taking of exercise in their vehicles; and the *Xystus*, in its original signification, according to the definition given by Vitruvius, was a large portico, wherein the athletic exercises were performed; though it is plainly used in this place for an open walk, ornamented much in the manner of our old-fashioned parterres: but its being raised above the walks which lay in the front, seems to justify its being called a *Terrace*.

‡ The *Circus* was a place set apart for the celebration of several public games, particularly the chariot-race. Its form was generally oblong, having a wall quite round, with ranges of seats for the convenience of spectators.

fields interspersed with thickets. At the extremity of this portico stands a grand dining-room, which opens upon one end of the terrace; as from the windows there is a very extensive prospect over the meadows up into the country, from whence you also have a view of the terrace, and such parts of the house which project forward, together with the woods enclosing the adjacent hippodrome.* Opposite almost to the centre of the portico, stands a square edifice, which encompasses a small area, shaded by four plane-trees, in the midst of which a fountain rises, from whence the water, running over the edges of a marble bason, gently refreshes the surrounding plane-trees, and the verdure underneath them. This apartment consists of a bed-chamber, secured from every kind of noise, and which the light itself cannot penetrate; together with a commón dining-room, which I use when I have none but intimate friends with me. A second portico looks upon this little area, and has the same prospect with the former I just now described. There is, besides, another room, which, being situated close to the nearest plane-tree, enjoys a constant shade and verdure: its sides are incrusted half-way with carved marble; and from thence to the ceiling a foliage is painted with birds intermixed among the branches, which has an effect altogether as agreeable as that of the carving: at the basis of which, a little fountain, playing through several small pipes into a vase, produces a most pleasing murmur. From a corner of this portico you enter

* A part of the garden, so called. See note, p. 241.

into a very spacious chamber, opposite to the grand dining-room, which, from some of its windows, has a view of the terrace, and from others, of the meadow; as those in the front look upon a cascade, which entertains at once both the eye and the ear; for the water, dashing from a great height, foams over the marble bason that receives it below. This room is extremely warm in winter, being much exposed to the sun; and in a cloudy day, the heat of an adjoining stove very well supplies his absence. From hence you pass through a spacious and pleasant undressing-room into the cold-bath-room, in which is a large gloomy bath: but if you are disposed to swim more at large, or in warmer water, in the middle of the area is a wide bason for that purpose, and near it a reservoir from whence you may be supplied with cold water to brace yourself again, if you should perceive you are too much relaxed by the warm. Contiguous to the cold-bath is another of a moderate degree of heat, which enjoys the kindly warmth of the sun, but not so intensely as that of the hot-bath, which projects farther. This last consists of three divisions, each of different degrees of heat: the two former lie entirely open to the sun; the latter, though not so much exposed to its rays, receives an equal share of its light. Over the undressing-room is built the tennis-court, which, by means of particular circles,* admits of different kinds of games. Not

* "These circles were probably no other than particular marks made on the floor, the success of their play depending on the ball's lighting in such a circle after it had been struck, which was the adversaries' business to prevent; and the many sorts of exercises this

far from the baths, is the stair-case leading to the enclosed portico, after you have first passed through three apartments: one of these looks upon the little area with the four plane-trees round it; the other has a sight of the meadows; and from the third you have a view of several vineyards: so that they have as many different prospects as expositions. At one end of the inclosed portico, and, indeed, taken off from it, is a chamber that looks upon the hippodrome, the vineyards, and the mountains; adjoining is a room which has a full exposure to the sun, especially in winter; and from whence runs an apartment that connects the hippodrome with the house: such is the form and aspect of the front. On the side, rises an enclosed summer-portico, which has not only a prospect of the vineyards, but seems almost contiguous to them. From the middle of this portico, you enter a dining-room, cooled by the salutary breezes from the Apennine valleys; from the windows in the back front, which are extremely large, there is a prospect of the vineyards; as you have also another view of them from the folding-doors, through the summer-portico. Along that side of this dining-room, where there are no windows, runs a private stair-case for the greater conveniency of serving at entertainments: at the farther end is a chamber, from whence the eye is pleased with a view of the vineyards, and (what is not less agreeable) of the

room was made for, might be diversified by lines or circles on the walls or floor; like the game of tennis, which, though it takes up one entire room, may serve for several games of the like nature." *Castel's Remarks on Tuscum*, p. 110.

portico. Underneath this room is an enclosed portico, somewhat resembling a grotto, which, enjoying in the midst of the summer heats its own natural coolness, neither admits nor wants the refreshment of external breezes. After you have passed both these porticos, at the end of the dining-room stands a third, which, as the day is more or less advanced, serves either for winter or summer use. It leads to two different apartments, one containing four chambers, the other three; each enjoying, by turns, both sun and shade. In the front of these agreeable buildings, lies a very spacious hippodrome,* entirely open in the middle, by which means the eye, upon your first entrance, takes in its whole extent at one glance. It is encompassed on every side with plane-trees, covered with ivy ;† so that while their heads flourish with their own foliage, their bodies enjoy a borrowed verdure; and thus, the ivy twining round the trunk and branches, spreads from tree to tree, and connects them to-

* The *Hippódromus*, in its proper signification, was a place among the Grecians set apart for horse-racing and other exercises of that kind. But it seems here to be nothing more than a particular walk, to which Pliny, perhaps, gave that name, from its bearing some resemblance in its form to the public places so called.

† "What the *Hederæ* were, that deserved a place in a garden," says Sir William Temple, in his Essay on Gardening, "I cannot guess, unless they had sorts of ivy unknown to us." But it does not seem necessary to have recourse to that supposition; for there are two sorts among us, which are very beautiful plants, the one called the silver-striped ivy, the other the yellow variegated ivy. The former, perhaps, is the *palentes Heredæ* of Virgil; (Georg. 4.) which epithet some of the critics, not attending to the different kinds of ivy, have, injudiciously, changed for *palantes*.

gether. Between each plane-tree are planted box-trees, and behind these bay-trees, which blend their shade with that of the planes. This plantation, forming a straight boundary on both sides of the hippodrome, bends at the farther end into a semi-circle, which, being set round and sheltered with cypress-trees, varies the prospect, and casts a deeper gloom; while the inward circular walks (for there are several) enjoying an open exposure, are perfumed with roses, and correct, by a very pleasing contrast, the coolness of the shade with the warmth of the sun. Having passed through these several winding-alleys, you enter a straight walk,* which breaks out into a variety of others, divided by box hedges. In one place, you have a little meadow; in another, the box is cut into a thousand different forms;† sometimes into letters, expressing the name of the master; sometimes that of the artificer: whilst here and there little obelisks rise inter-

* Here seems to begin what we properly call the *Garden*, and is the only description of a *Roman* one, which has come down to us. Virgil, indeed, mentions that of his Corycian friend's, but he only gives an account of the plants which that contented *old man* cultivated, without describing the form in which this little spot was laid out.

† It is very remarkable, that this false taste in gardening, so justly rejected by modern improvements in that agreeable art, was introduced among the Romans at a time, when one *should little* expect to meet with any inelegancies in the polite refinements of life. Marius, the friend of Julius Cæsar, and peculiar favourite of Augustus, (of whom there is still extant a letter to Cicero, greatly admired for the beauty of its sentiments and expression,) is said to have first taught his countrymen this monstrous method of distorting nature, by cutting trees into regular forms.—*Columel.* l. 12. c. 44.

mixed alternately with fruit-trees: when, on a sudden, in the midst of this elegant regularity, you are surprised with an imitation of the negligent beauties of rural nature: in the centre of which lies a spot surrounded with a knot of dwarf plane-trees.* Beyond these is a walk planted with the smooth and twining acanthus,† where the trees are also cut into a variety of names and shapes. At the upper end is an alcove of white marble, shaded with vines,

* The plane-tree was much cultivated among the Romans, upon account of its extraordinary shade, and they used to nourish it with wine (*Plin. Hist. Nat.*) instead of water, believing, as the ingenious Sir William Temple observes, "this tree loved that liquor, as well as those who used to drink under its shade." Virgil mentions it as *ministrantem—potantibus umbras.* Georg. 4. It was a favourite tree, likewise, among the Grecians:

Δυλαρ εμοι γλυκυς υπνος υπο πλαλαγι βαθυφυλλω,
Και παγας φιλεοιμι τον εγγυθεν ηχον ακουειν.
Mosch. Idyl.

Give me beneath the plane-tree's shade to lie,
While tinkling fountains sweetly murmur by.

† It is probable the acanthus, here mentioned, is not the same plant with that described above; it is certain, at least, there were different sorts of them. It seems to be of the kind which Virgil speaks of in the 4th Georgic:

Aut flexi *tacuisseem vimen Acanthi;*

whatever that was, which is by no means clear. The ingenious botanist mentioned before, supposes it to be *Branc-ursine;* and that Dryden was mistaken in translating this passage,

——The winding *Trail*
Of Bear's-foot——

"For," says he, "it is by no means a trailing plant." But there is reason, it should seem, to believe the contrary; for it is not very probable, that Virgil should use the epithet *Flexus,* in allusion, as

supported by four small Carystian pillars.* From this bench the water gushing through several little pipes, as if it were pressed out by the weight of the persons who repose themselves upon it, falls into a stone cistern underneath, from whence it is received into a fine polished marble bason, so artfully contrived, that it is always full without ever overflowing. When I sup here, this bason serves for a table, the largest sort of dishes being placed round the margin, while the smaller ones swim about in the form of little vessels and water-fowl. Corresponding to this, is a fountain which is incessantly emptying and filling; for the water, which it throws up a great height, falling back into it, is, by means of two openings, returned as fast as it is received. Fronting the alcove, (and which reflects as great an ornament to it, as it borrows from it,) stands a summer-house of exquisite marble, the doors whereof project and open into a green enclosure; as from its upper and lower windows, the eye is presented with a variety of different verdures. Next to this

this gentleman imagines, to the story of the tile and the basket, which gave the first hint to the inventor of the Corinthian capital. It is much more likely and natural, that he should join an epithet to acanthus, which denoted a certain general quality attending it, than any foreign and accidental circumstance, especially one so extremely remote. And this conjecture seems to be strongly supported by Pliny's calling it *Flexuosus*.

* This marble came from Carystus, (now called Caristo,) in Eubœa, an island in the Archipelago, which has since changed its name into *Negroponte*. From hence, likewise, it is said, the Romans fetched that famous stone, out of which they spun a sort of incombustible cloth, wherein they wrapped the bodies of their dead, and thereby preserved their ashes distinct and unmixed with those of the funeral pile.

is a little private recess, (which, though it seems distinct, may be laid into the same room,) furnished with a couch; and, notwithstanding it has windows on every side, yet it enjoys a very agreeable gloominess, by means of a spreading vine which climbs to the top, and entirely overshades it. Here you may recline and fancy yourself in a wood; with this difference only, that you are not exposed to the weather. In this place a fountain also rises and instantly disappears: in different quarters are disposed several marble-seats, which serve, no less than the summer-house, as so many reliefs after one is wearied with walking. Near each seat is a little fountain; and, throughout the whole hippodrome, several small rills run murmuring along, wheresoever the hand of art thought proper to conduct them, watering here and there different spots of verdure, and, in their progress, refreshing the whole.

And now, I should not have hazarded the imputation of being too minute in this detail, if I had not proposed to lead you into every corner of my house and gardens. You will hardly, I imagine, think it a trouble to read the description of a place, which I am persuaded would please you were you to see it; especially as you have it in your power to stop, and, by throwing aside my letter, sit down as it were, and rest yourself as often as you think proper. I had, at the same time, a view to my own gratification: as I confess I have a very great affection for this villa, which was chiefly built or finished by myself. In a word, (for why should I conceal from my friend my sentiments, whether right or wrong?) I look upon it as

the first duty of every writer frequently to throw his eyes upon his title-page, and to consider well the subject he has proposed to himself; and he may be assured if he precisely pursues his plan, he cannot justly be thought tedious; whereas, on the contrary, if he suffers himself to wander from it, he will most certainly incur that censure. Homer, you know, has employed many verses in the description of the arms of Achilles, as Virgil also has in those of Æneas; yet neither of them are prolix, because they each keep within the limits of their original design. Aratus, you see, is not deemed too circumstantial, though he traces and enumerates the minutest stars: for he does not go out of his way for that purpose, he only follows where his subject leads him. In the same manner, (to compare small things with great,) if, endeavouring to give you an idea of my house, I have not deviated into any article foreign to the purpose, it is not my letter which describes, but my villa which is described, that is to be considered as large. But not to dwell any longer upon this digression, lest I should myself be condemned by the maxim I have just laid down; I have now informed you why I prefer my Tuscan villa, to those which I possess at Tusculum, Tiber, and Preneste.* Besides the advantages already mentioned, I here enjoy a more profound retirement, as I am at a farther distance from the business of the town, and the interruption of troublesome avocations. All is calm and composed;

* Now called Frascati, Tivoli, and Palestrina, all of them situated in the *Campagna di Roma*, and at no great distance from Rome.

circumstances which contribute, no less than its clear air and unclouded sky, to that health of body and cheerfulness of mind which I particularly enjoy in this place; both which I preserve by the exercise of study and hunting. Indeed, there is no place which agrees better with all my family in general; I am sure, at least, I have not yet lost one (and I speak it with the sentiments I ought) of all those I brought with me hither: may the gods continue that happiness to *me*, and that honour to my *villa*! Farewell.

LETTER VII.

TO CALVISIUS.

IT is certain that the law does not allow a corporate city to inherit any estate by will, or to receive a legacy. Saturninus, however, who has appointed me his heir, had left a fourth part of his estate to our corporation of Comum; which devise he afterwards changed into an absolute legacy of 400,000 sesterces.* This bequest, in a legal view, is undoubtedly void; but, considered as the clear and express will of the deceased, ought to stand firm and valid: a consideration, in my opinion, (though I am afraid the lawyers will not be pleased with what I say,) of higher regard than any law whatsoever, especially when the interest of one's native province is concerned. It would be extremely inconsistent in me, who made them a

* About L.3,200 of our money.

present of eleven hundred thousand sesterces* out of my own patrimony, to withhold a benefaction from them of little more than a third part of that sum, out of an estate which is entirely adventitious. You, who, like a true citizen, have the same affection for this our common municipal town, will join with me, I dare say, in these sentiments. I wish, therefore, you would, at the next assembly of the Decurii, acquaint them, in a respectful manner, how the law stands in this case, and, at the same time, inform them, that I shall not take advantage of it, but will pay them the 400,000 sesterces according to the directions in the will of Saturninus. You will represent this donation as *his* present, and *his* liberality; I only claim the merit of complying with his request. I forbear writing to the senate concerning this affair, fully relying upon your friendship and prudence, and being assured that you are both able and willing to act for me upon this occasion as I would for myself; besides, I am afraid I should not seem to have so cautiously guarded my expressions in a letter, as you will be able to do in a speech. The countenance, the gesture, and even the tone of voice, governs and determines the sense of the speaker; whereas, a letter, being destitute of these advantages, is more liable to the malignant construction of those who are inclined to misinterpret its meaning. Farewell.

* About L.8,800 of our money.

LETTER VIII.

TO CAPITO.

YOU are not singular in the advice you give me to undertake the writing of history: it is a work that has been frequently pressed upon me by several others of my friends, and in which I have some thoughts of engaging. Not because I have any confidence of succeeding in this way; (it would be presuming upon the event of an experiment which I have never yet made,) but because it is a noble employment to rescue from oblivion those who deserve to be eternally remembered; and, by extending the reputation of others, to advance at the same time our own. Nothing, I confess, so strongly stimulates my breast, as the desire of acquiring a lasting name: a passion highly worthy of the human heart, especially of *his*, who, not being conscious of any ill, is not afraid of being known to posterity. It is the continual subject, therefore, of my thoughts,

By what fair deed I too a name may raise;*

for to that I moderate my wishes: the rest,

And gather round the world immortal praise,

is much beyond my hopes:

Though yet†—However, the former is sufficient;

* Virgil, Georg. 1. sub. init.

† Part of a verse from the fifth Æneid, where Menestheus, one of the competitors in the naval games, who was in some danger

and the writing of history is, perhaps, the only means I may promise myself to acquire it. Oratory and poetry, unless carried to the highest perfection, are talents of small recommendation; but history, in whatever manner executed, is always entertaining. Mankind are naturally inquisitive; and so fond of having this turn gratified, that they will listen with attention to the plainest matter of fact, and the most common tale. But, besides, I have an example in my own family that inclines me to engage in a work of this kind; my uncle and adoptive father* having acquired great reputation as a very accurate historian: and the philosophers, you know, recommend it to us to tread in the steps of our ancestors, when they have led the way to us in the right path. If you ask me, then, why do I not immediately enter upon the task? my reason is this; I have pleaded some very important causes, and (though I am not extremely sanguine in my

of being distanced, exhorts his men to exert their utmost vigour to prevent such a disgrace. The reader, perhaps, will not be displeased to see the whole passage, as it is excellently translated by Mr. Pitt; which I am the more inclined to transcribe, not only as it will show the propriety of my author's application of the verse; but as I am glad of any opportunity of quoting from a poet whose translation of the Æneid does honour to the English language:

Now, now, my friends, your utmost power display;
Rise to your oars, and sweep the watery way:
Though yet—but ah! let those the palm obtain,
Those whom thy favours crown, great monarch of the main!
But to return the lags of all the day,
Oh! wipe, my friends, that shameful stain away.

* See Book 3. Let. 5.

hopes concerning them) I have determined to revise my speeches, lest, for want of this remaining labour, all the pains they cost me should be thrown away, and they, with their author, be buried in oblivion: for, with respect to posterity, the work that was never finished, might as well have never been begun. You will think, perhaps, I might correct my pleadings, and write a history at the same time: I wish, indeed, I were capable of executing that double labour at the same time; but they are each such important undertakings, that either of them separate is abundantly sufficient for my powers. I was but nineteen when I first appeared at the bar; and yet it is only now at last I understand (and that, in truth, but imperfectly,) what is essential to constitute a complete orator. How then shall I be able to support the joint weight of an additional burden? It is true, history and oratory have in many points a general resemblance; yet, in those very articles in which they seem to agree, there are several circumstances wherein they differ. Narration is common to them both; but narration of a distinct kind. The former contents itself frequently with common and familiar facts; the latter requires splendid, elevated, and extraordinary events: strength and sinew are sufficient in *that*, but beauty and ornament are essential to *this*: the excellency of the *one*, consists in a strong, grave, and close style; of the *other*, in a diffusive, flowing, and harmonious diction: in short, the words, the emphasis, and whole turn and structure of the respective periods, are extremely different in these two arts. For, as Thucydides observes, there is a

wide distance between compositions which are calculated for a *present purpose*, and those which are designed to remain as *lasting monuments* to posterity; by the first of which expressions he alludes to oratory, and by the other to history. For these reasons I am not inclined to blend together two performances of such distinct natures, which, as they are each of the highest rank, necessarily, therefore, require an undivided attention; lest, confounded by a crowd of incongruous ideas, I should introduce into the one what is only suitable to the other. Therefore, (to speak in the language of our bar,) I must *beg leave that the cause may be adjourned.* In the mean while, I refer it to your consideration, from what period I shall commence my history. Shall I take it up from those remote ages which have been treated of already by others? In this way, indeed, the materials will be ready prepared to my hands, but the collating of the several historians will be a work of great labour: or, shall I treat only of the present times, and in which no other author has gone before me? If so, I may probably give offence to many, and please but few. For, in an age so over-run with vice, you will find infinitely more to condemn than approve; yet your praise, though ever so lavish, will be deemed too reserved; and your censure, though ever so cautious, too severe. However, this does not at all discourage me; for I want not resolution to bear testimony to truth. I expect, then, that you prepare the way which you have pointed out to me, and determine what subject I shall fix upon for my history; that when I shall be

ready to enter upon the task you have assigned me, I may not be delayed by some new difficulty. Farewell.

LETTER IX.

TO SATURNINUS.

YOUR letter made very different impressions upon me, as it brought me news which I both rejoiced and grieved to receive. It gave me pleasure when it informed me you were detained in Rome; and though you will tell me that circumstance affords you none, yet I cannot but rejoice at it, since you assure me you remain there upon my account, and defer the recital of your work till my return: for which I am greatly obliged to you. But I was much concerned at that article of your letter, which mentioned the dangerous illness of Julius Valens: though, indeed, with respect to himself, it ought to affect me with other sentiments, as it cannot but be for his advantage, the sooner he is relieved by death from a distemper of which there is no hope he can ever be cured. But what you add concerning Avitus, who died in his return from the province where he had been quæstor, is an accident too justly demanding our sorrow. His dying on board a ship, at a distance from his brother, whom he tenderly loved, and from his mother and sisters, are circumstances, which, though they cannot affect him now, yet undoubtedly embittered his last moments, and aggravate the affliction of those friends he has left behind. How se-

vere is the reflection, that a youth of his well-formed disposition should become extinct in the prime of life, and snatched from those high honours to which his virtues, had they been permitted to grow to their full maturity, would certainly have raised him! How did his bosom glow with the love of the fine arts! How many volumes has he perused! How many treatises has he transcribed!—but the fruits of his labours are now perished with himself, and for ever lost to posterity. Yet why indulge my sorrow?—a passion which, if not restrained, always magnifies the slightest circumstances, and finds additional causes to aggravate our grief. I will put an end, therefore, to my letter, that I may to the tears which yours has drawn from me. Farewell.

LETTER X.

TO ANTONINUS.

I AM never more sensible of the superior excellency of your verses, than when I endeavour to imitate them. As the hand of the painter must always fail when perfect beauty sits for the picture, so I labour to catch the graces of my original, but still fall short of them. Let me conjure you, then, to continue to supply us with many more such excellent models, which every man must wish to imitate, but few, perhaps none, will ever be able to equal. Farewell.

LETTER XI.

TO TRANQUILLUS.

IT is time you should acquit the promise my verses gave to our common friends, of your works. The world is every day impatiently enquiring after them; and there is some danger of your being summoned, in *form*, to give an account of your delay. I am myself a good deal backward in publishing, but you are still slower. You must hasten your hand, however; otherwise the severity of my satire may, perhaps, extort from you what the blandishments of my softer muse could not obtain. Your work is already arrived to that degree of perfection, that the file can only weaken, not polish it. Allow me, then, the pleasure of seeing your name in the title-page of a book, and suffer the works of my dear Tranquillus to be recited and transcribed, to be bought and read. It is but fair, and agreeable to our mutual friendship, that you should give me in return the same pleasure you receive from me. Farewell.

LETTER XII.

TO FABATUS.*

YOUR letter informs me that you have erected a noble public portico,† as a memorial o

* Grandfather to Calphurnia, Pliny's wife.

† These porticos, which were carried to an extreme degree of magnificence, served for various uses; sometimes for the assembly of the senate, sometimes for stands of the most curious merchandize.

yourself and your son; and that, the next day after the ceremony of opening it, you engaged to repair and beautify the gates of our city at your own charge; thus it is that you rise from one act of munificence to another! I take a part in every thing that concerns your glory; which, from the alliance that subsists between us, in some degree redounds to mine; and am pleased to see the memory of my father-in-law delivered down to posterity by such beautiful structures. I rejoice, too, at the honour which, by this means, results to our native province; and as every thing that tends to her advantage is highly agreeable to me, by what hand soever it may be conferred, so particularly when it is by yours. I have only to wish, that heaven may continue to cherish in you this generous spirit, and grant you many years in which to exert it; for your bounty, I am well persuaded, will not terminate here, but extend itself to farther acts of munificence. Generosity, when once she is set forward, knows not how to stop; and the more familiar we are with the lovely form, the more enamoured we become of her charms. Farewell.

But the general use they were put to was the pleasure of walking in them, like the present piazzas in Italy.—*Fabric. Descript. Rom.* cap. 13. Here likewise works of genius were publicly recited, and the philosophers held their disputations. The famous Pœcile Portico, or picture gallery at Athens, must have afforded the noblest scene of this kind imaginable to a lover of the imitative arts; Polygnotus, Panænus, and all the great masters of that elegant age, having contributed to embellish it with the finest productions of their pencils.—Vid. *Meursii. Athen. Att.* lib. i. cap. 5.

LETTER XIII.

TO SCAURUS.

HAVING thoughts of publishing a little speech which I have composed, I invited some of my friends, whose judgments I respect, to attend the recital; and, that I might be more secure of hearing the truth of their sentiments, I selected only a small number. I have a double view in these rehearsals: the first is, that the solicitude of being approved by the audience may excite my attention; the next, that those errors which partiality to myself concealed from my own observation, may be pointed out to me. I succeeded in my design, and my friends obliged me with their sincere opinions; as I likewise discovered, in my turn, some passages which required correction. I send you the piece, therefore, as it is now altered. The occasion of my composing it will appear from the title; and for the rest I refer you to the speech, which I hope you will peruse so carefully, as not to stand in need of a preface. I entreat you to tell me sincerely your sentiments of the whole, and of its several parts; I shall be more disposed to suppress or publish it, as your judgment shall incline either way. Farewell.

LETTER XIV.

TO VALERIANUS.

YOU desire me to inform you (agreeably to my promise*) what success attended Nepos in his accusation of Tuscillinus Nominatus. The latter being brought before the senate, pleaded his own cause, though, indeed, no person appeared to support the accusation. On the contrary, the deputies from the Vicentini, were so far from attempting to prove their charge, that they favoured his defence. The sum of what he urged in his own behalf was, that it was his courage, and not his integrity, had failed him; that he set out with a design of pleading the cause, and actually came into the senate for that purpose, but, being discouraged by his friends, he withdrew; that they dissuaded him from persisting to oppose (especially in the senate) the inclinations of a senator, who did not contend so much for the fair itself, as for his own credit and character, which he looked upon as concerned in this cause; that if he should not desist, he would suffer greater indignities than in his former pleading. (And there were some, though, indeed, but a few, who expressed high indignation at his speech.) He proceeded to implore the clemency of the senate, with tears in his eyes; prudently endeavouring, throughout his whole speech, (as he is a man extremely well versed in the arts of oratory,) to appear

* See Letter IV. of this Book.

rather to sue for pardon than for justice. Afranius Dexter, the consul elect, moved for acquitting him; and the purport of his speech was to this effect: That Nominatus would have acted more prudently if he had gone through the cause of the Vicentini with the same resolution he began it: however, since it did not appear he had been guilty of this neglect with any fraudulent design, and that he had not been convicted of any thing which merited public animadversion, it was his opinion he ought to be acquitted, but that he should return to the Vicentini whatever gratuity he had received from them. This motion was approved by the whole senate, except Flavius Aper: his opinion was, that he should be suspended from exercising the profession of an advocate during five years; and although he could not prevail with any member to adopt his sentiments, he obstinately persisted in them. He even compelled Dexter, who spoke first on the opposite side, to take an oath, that he really thought the motion he* had made was for the benefit of the republic; agreeably to a law which he produced concerning the assembling of the senate.† But this, notwithstanding it was certainly legal, was opposed by some, who thought it a reflection upon Dexter, as if he had been unduly influenced in his opinion. But before the votes of the house were collected, Nigrinus, a tribune of the

* Dexter.

† The law alluded to is not now to be found entire in any Roman writer; but it appears, from certain scattered passages in different ancient authors, to have contained, among other directions, the article mentioned in the text.

people, read a very elegant and sensible remonstrance, wherein he strongly complained, that the profession of the law was become venal, and that the advocates took money even to betray the cause of their clients; that they made a shameful trade of their function; and that, instead of honour, which was formerly their only reward, they now lived upon the spoils of their fellow-citizens, from whom they received large and annual stipends. He gave the senate a summary account of the laws which had been made upon this subject, and reminded them, likewise, of their own decrees to the same purpose: he concluded with observing, that since both the authority of the laws, and of the senate, had been contemned, it was highly necessary to address the emperor, that he would be pleased, himself, to interpose, and provide some remedy to so great an evil. Accordingly, a few days after, an edict was published, drawn up with a proper mixture of mildness and severity; for which I refer you to the journals of the public.* I cannot but congratulate myself upon this occasion, that in all the causes in which I have been concerned, I never made any bargain, or received any fee, reward, or even present whatsoever. One ought, no doubt, to avoid whatever is mean and unworthy, not so much because it is illegal, as because it is dishonourable. But still there is great satisfaction in finding the legislature levelling its prohibitions against a practice, which one never suffered one's self to follow. The glory of my conduct may, or rather, indeed, most cer-

* See Book VII. Letter 33. note.

tainly will, be considerably eclipsed, when this restraint shall universally prevail by compulsion, which I always laid upon myself by choice. In the mean time, however, I enjoy the pleasure of my friends' jests; while some tell me I certainly foresaw this edict; and others, that it was particularly levelled against my avarice and extortion. Farewell.

LETTER XV.

TO PONTIUS.

I WAS at Comum when I heard that Cornutus Tertullus had accepted the serveyorship* of the Æmilian way. This news was inexpressibly agreeable to me, both upon his account and my own: upon *his*, because though ambition should be (as it certainly is) far removed from his heart, yet it cannot but be acceptable to him to receive so great an honour without seeking it; upon *mine*, because it heightens the satisfaction which results from my own office, to see a man of so distinguished a char-

* This was an office of great dignity among the Romans, and usually conferred upon those who had been consuls. Thus Cæsar is mentioned by Plutarch as surveyor of the Appian way. These roads extended to a great distance from the city on all sides; the most noble of which was the Appian, computed to reach three hundred and fifty miles. Mr. Wright, in his Travels, speaking of this road, observes, that "though it be much broken in several places, and travelling over it very bad, in others it is wonderfully well preserved, notwithstanding it be computed near two thousand years old. They are paved with such hard stones, that they are rather polished than worn, and so well joined, that in some places the whole breadth of the way seems one entire piece."

acter as Cornutus, appointed to one of the same nature ;* for, to be placed in the same rank with the worthy, is an honour equal to an increase of dignities. And where, indeed, is the man who exceeds Cornutus in merit and virtue ? Or whose conduct is a more express model of ancient manners ? In saying this, I do not found my judgment upon fame ; which, however, with great justice, speaks of him in the highest terms ; but upon long and repeated experience. We have ever been joined in the same friendships with the most shining characters of both sexes, which this age has produced ; an union that strongly cemented our mutual amity. To these private ties were added those of a more public nature : he was my colleague in the treasury, as well as in the consulship ; and in both instances I could not have acted with a man more agreeable to my wishes. These were opportunities of gaining a thorough knowledge of his uncommon virtues : I followed him, therefore, as a guide, and revered him as a parent, not so much upon account of his age, as his merit. Accordingly, I rejoice no less for my own sake than for his, and upon a public as well as a private consideration ; since virtue is no longer, as formerly,† exposed to the most cruel dangers, but advanced to the noblest dignity. But if I were to indulge the joyous sentiments I feel upon this occasion, I should never have finished my letter. Let me turn, then, to an account of what

* It appears by some ancient inscriptions still remaining, that Pliny was surveyor of the river Tiber, and its banks ; to which office, it is probable, he here alludes.

† Alluding to the times of Nero and Domitian.

I was doing when your messenger arrived. He found me with my wife's grandfather and aunt, together with several other friends, whose company I had not enjoyed for a considerable time: I was traversing my grounds, hearing the complaints of the farmers, running over their tedious accounts, and had before me writings and letters far different from those to which my inclination early devoted me; in a word, I was preparing to return to Rome. For I have obtained but a short leave of absence; and, indeed, the news of this office being conferred on Cornutus, reminds me to hasten to the duties of my own. I hope your favourite *Campania* will resign you about the same time; so that when I return to Rome, not a day may be lost to our social intercourse. Farewell.

LETTER XVI.

TO MARCELLINUS.

I WRITE to you impressed with the deepest sorrow; the youngest daughter of my intimate friend Fundanus is dead! Never, surely, was there a more agreeable and more amiable young person, or one who better deserved to have enjoyed a long, I had almost said an immortal life! She was scarcely fourteen, and yet united the wisdom of age and discretion of a matron, with the sprightliness of youth, and sweetness of virgin modesty. With what an endearing fondness did she hang on her father's neck! How kindly and respectfully behave to us his friends! How affectionately treat all those,

who, in their respective offices, had the care of her education! She employed much of her time in study and reading; indulged herself in few diversions, and entered even into those with singular caution and reserve. With what forbearance, with what patience, with what fortitude, did she endure her last illness! She complied with all the directions of her physicians; encouraged the hopes of her sister and her father; and, when her strength was totally exhausted, supported her spirits by the sole force of her own mind. The vigour of her mind, indeed, continued even to her last moments, unbroken by the pain of a long illness, or the terrors of approaching death; a reflection which renders the loss of her so much the more sensibly to be lamented by us. It is a loss infinitely, indeed, severe! and aggravated by the particular conjuncture in which it happened! She was contracted to a most worthy youth; the wedding-day was fixed, and we were all invited. How sad a change, from the highest joy to the deepest sorrow! How shall I express the wound that pierced my heart, when I heard Fundanus himself (as grief is ever fond of dwelling upon every circumstance to increase the affliction) ordering the money he had designed to lay out upon clothes and jewels for her marriage, to be employed in myrrh and spices for her funeral! He is a man of great good sense and accomplishments, having applied himself, from his earliest youth, to the noblest arts and sciences; but all the maxims of fortitude and philosophy, which he has derived from books, or delivered by his own precepts, he now absolutely rejects; and every firmer

virtue of his heart gives place to paternal tenderness. You will excuse, you will even approve his grief, when you consider what a loss he has sustained! He has lost a daughter, who resembled him in his manners, as well as his person, and exactly copied out all her father. If you should think proper to write to him upon the subject of a calamity so justly to be deplored, let me remind you not to urge the severer arguments of consolation which seem to carry a sort of reproof with them, but to use those only of a gentle and sympathizing humanity. Time will render him more open to the dictates of reason; for as a recent wound shrinks from the hand of the surgeon, but gradually submits to, and even requires the means of cure, so a mind under the first impression of a misfortune, shuns and rejects all the persuasions of reason, but, at length, if applied with tenderness, calmly and willingly resigns itself to consolation. Farewell.

LETTER XVII.

TO SPURINNA.

KNOWING, as I do, how much you admire the polite arts, and what satisfaction you take in seeing young men of quality pursue the steps of their ancestors, I seize this earliest opportunity of informing you, that I went to-day to hear Calpurnius Piso read an elegant and spirited poem, he has composed, entitled the *Sports of Love*. His numbers, which were elegiac, were tender, sweet, and flowing, at the same time that they occasionally rose into all the sublimity of diction which the nature of

his subject required. He varied his style from the lofty to the simple, from the close to the copious, from the grave to the florid, with equal genius and judgment. These beauties were much improved and recommended by a most harmonious voice, which a very becoming modesty rendered still more pleasing. A confusion and concern in the countenance of a speaker casts a grace upon all he utters; for there is a certain decent timidity, which, I know not how, is infinitely more engaging than the assured and self-sufficient air of confidence. I might mention several other circumstances to his advantage, and am the more inclined to point them out, as they are exceedingly striking in a person of his age, and are most uncommon in a youth of his quality. But, not to enter into a farther detail of his merit, I will only add, that when he had finished his poem, I embraced him with the utmost complacency; and being persuaded, that nothing is a greater encouragement than applause, I exhorted him to persevere in the paths he had entered, and to shine out to posterity with the same glorious lustre which was reflected upon him from his ancestors. I congratulated his excellent mother, and particularly his brother, who gained as much honour by the generous affection he discovered upon this occasion, as Calpurnius did by his eloquence; so remarkable a solicitude he showed for him when he began to recite his poem, and so much pleasure in his success. May the gods grant me frequently to have it in my power to send you accounts of this nature! for I have a partiality to the age in which I live, and should rejoice to find it not barren of

merit. I ardently wish, therefore, our young men of quality would have something else to show of honourable memorial in their houses than the images* of their ancestors. As for those which are placed in the mansion of these excellent youths, I figure them to myself as silently applauding and encouraging their pursuits, and, (what is a sufficient glory to both the brothers) as recognizing their kindred. Farewell.

LETTER XVIII.

TO MACER.

ALL is well with me since it is so with you. You are happy, I find, in the company of your wife and son; and are enjoying the pleasures of the sea, the freshness of the fountains, the verdure of the fields, and the elegancies of a most agreeable villa; for so I judge it to be, since *he*,† who was perfectly happy ere fortune had raised him to what is generally esteemed the highest point of human felicity, chose it for the place of his retirement. As for myself, I am employed at my Tuscan villa in hunting and studying, sometimes alternately, and sometimes both together;‡ but I am not yet able to determine in

* None had the right of using family pictures, or statues, but those whose ancestors, or themselves, had borne some of the highest dignities. So that the *jus imaginis* was much the same thing among the Romans, as the right of bearing a coat of arms among us.—KEN. *Antiq.*

† It is supposed by some commentators, that Pliny alludes here to Nerva; who, being suspected by Domitian, was ordered, by that emperor, to retire to Tarentum, where, without any views of reigning, he quietly sat down in the enjoyment of a private life.

‡ See Book I. Letter 6. and the note there.

which of those pursuits it is most difficult to succeed. Farewell.

LETTER XIX.

TO PAULINUS.

AS I know the humanity with which you treat your own servants, I do not scruple to confess to you the indulgence I show to mine. I have ever in my mind Homer's* character of Ulysses,

Who swayed his people with a father's love.

And the very expression† in our language for the head of a family, suggests the rule of one's conduct towards it. But were I naturally of a rough and hardened cast of temper, the ill state of health of my freedman Zosimus (who has the stronger claim to a humane treatment at my hands, as he now stands much in need of it) would be sufficient to soften me. He is a person of great worth, diligent in his services, and well skilled in literature; but his chief talent, and, indeed, his distinguishing qualification, is that of a comedian, wherein he highly excels. He pronounces, with great judgment, propriety, and gracefulness: he has a very good hand too upon the lyre, and performs with more skill than is necessary for one of his profession. To this I must add, he reads history, oratory, and poetry, as perfectly well as if it had been the sole object of his study. I am the more particular in enumerating his qualifications, that you may see how many

* Odyssey, lib. 5. 11.

† The Latin word for a master of a family, implies a *father* of a family.

agreeable services I receive from him. He is, indeed, endeared to me by the ties of a long affection, which is heightened by the danger he is now in. For nature has so formed our hearts, that nothing contributes more to inflame our passion for any enjoyment, than the apprehension of being deprived of it; a sentiment which Zosimus has given me occasion to experience more than once. Some years ago, he strained his lungs so much by too vehement an exertion of his voice, that he spit blood; upon which account I sent him into Egypt;* from whence, after a long absence, he lately returned, with great benefit to his health. But having again exerted himself for several days together beyond his strength, he was reminded of his former malady, by a slight return of his cough, and a spitting of blood. For this reason, I intend to send him to your farm at Forum-Julii,† having frequently heard you mention it as an exceeding fine air, and recommend the milk of that place as very salutary in disorders of this nature. I beg you would give directions to your people to receive him into your house, and to supply him with what he shall have occasion for; which will not be much; for he is so temperate, as not only to abstain from delicacies, but even to deny himself the necessaries his ill state of health requires. I shall furnish him towards his journey with whatever will be sufficient for one of his abstemious turn, who is coming under your roof. Farewell.

* The Roman physicians used to send their patients in consumptive cases into Egypt, particularly to Alexandria.

† Frejus in Provence, the southern part of France.

LETTER XX.

TO URSUS.

SOON after the Bithynians had finished their prosecution of Julius Bassus, they also impeached their late governor Rufus Varenus; who had been just before (and that, too, at their own request) appointed counsel for them against Bassus. Being introduced into the senate, they petitioned that an enquiry might be made into his conduct. Varenus, on the other hand, begged that all proceedings might be stayed till he could send for the witnesses necessary to his defence; but this being opposed by the Bithynians, that point was debated. I was counsel, (and no unsuccessful one) for Varenus; but whether a truly able advocate or not, you will judge when you read my speech. Fortune has a very considerable share in the event of every cause; the sagacity, the voice, the manner of the orator, even the circumstance of time itself; in a word, the general disposition of the senate, as it is either favourable or adverse to the accused, all conspire to influence the decision. But when a speech is read in the closet, it is stripped of all these external circumstances, and has nothing to fear or hope from favour or prejudice, from lucky or unlucky accidents. Fonteius Magius, one of the Bithynians, replied to me with great pomp of words, and very little to the purpose; a character applicable to many of the Greek orators, as well as to himself. They mistake volubility for copiousness, and thus overwhelm you with an endless torrent of cold and

unaffecting periods.* Julius Candidus used, very justly, to say, "Eloquence is one thing, and loquacity another." Eloquence, indeed, is the talent of very few; or rather, if we believe Marcus Antonius, of none;† but that faculty which Candidus

* This verbose and turgid style, which Pliny here condemns, the elegant Petronius, likewise, mentions with equal contempt, and represents it as having first began to infect the purity of Attic eloquence about this time. This false species of oratory spread to Athens from Asia, where the swelling and highly figurative style has prevailed, from the earliest accounts we have of those people, to this day.—Vid. *Petron. Satir. sub init.*

† The great masters among the ancients, in eloquence, as well as those in all other of the fine arts, heated their imaginations with a certain ideal perfection, which, as they could not explain in what it consisted, so neither, they owned, could they reach in their respective works. But however notional this supreme beauty, this το πρεπον and *decorum*, as it was called, might be, yet it was productive of very real and substantial excellencies; and while the geniuses of the several artists were stretching after this flying form, they reached those glorious productions that have been the admired models to all succeeding ages. Agreeably to this high enthusiasm, Marcus Antonius, who bears a part in Tully's dialogue, entitled *The Orator*, says, that, "in his earlier years, he published a treatise upon that subject, wherein he asserted, that though he had known some few indeed, who deserved to be called orators, in the popular sense of that word, yet he had met with none who had ever arrived at true *eloquence.*"—Vid. *Tull. de Orat.* lib. 1. And to that treatise, Pliny, it is probable, here alludes. "All the sciences, indeed, (as a very ingenious author observes,) have their particular chimeras; certain fancied points after which they run, without ever being able to overtake, but which lead, however, to very solid acquisitions. Thus (says that writer) chemistry has its philosopher's stone; geometry, its quadrature of the circle; astronomy, its longitude; mechanics, its perpetual motion: these, though it is impossible to find, it is useful to enquire after. Morality, too, is not without her chimeras; pure disinterestedness and perfect friendship are of that sort; none will ever arrive at them; nev-

called *loquacity*, is common to numbers, and generally attends impudence. The next day, Homulus spoke in defence of Varenus with great art, strength, and elegance; to whom Nigrinus made a very concise, but pertinent and graceful, reply. It was the opinion of Acilius Rufus, the consul elect, that the Bithynians should be permitted to present their information; but he took no notice of the petition of Varenus; which was only another way of putting his negative upon it. Cornelius Priscus, formerly consul, declared, that he thought the request of both parties should be granted; and his opinion prevailed. Thus we gained our point; and, though we had not the authority either of law or usage on our side, yet certainly the thing we insisted upon was perfectly equitable. But I will not, in this place, anticipate my reasons for thinking so, that you may be more impatient to turn to my speech. For if it be true, as Homer sings, that

> ——Novel lays attract our ravished ears;
> But old, the mind with inattention hears:*

I will not suffer the intemperate *loquacity* of my letter to despoil my speech of its principal flower, by depriving it of that novelty which is, indeed, its chief recommendation. Farewell.

ertheless it is proper to have them in view, at least, by that means, several other virtues may be acquired. It is necessary, in all things, to propose to ourselves a certain point of perfection beyond our abilities to reach; for we should never set out if we thought of arriving no farther than we shall in fact. It is expedient, therefore, to have some imaginary term in aim, in order to forward and animate our pursuits.—FONTENELLE, *Dial des Morts*.

* Pope.

LETTER XXI.

TO RUFUS.

I WENT into the Julian court,* to attend a cause, in which, at the next sitting, I was to reply. The judges had taken their seats, the decemviri† were arrived, the eyes of the audience were fixed upon the counsel, and all was hushed in silence and expectation, when an order arrived from the prætor, that the court should be adjourned; a circumstance extremely agreeable to me, who am never so well prepared, but that I am glad of gaining farther time. The occasion of the court's rising thus abruptly, was an edict of Nepos, the prætor for criminal causes, wherein he ordered all persons concerned as plaintiffs or defendants in any cause before him to take notice, that he designed strictly to put in force the decree of the senate, annexed to his edict. This decree was expressed in the following words: "All persons whosoever, that have any law-suits depending, are hereby required and commanded, before any proceedings be had thereon, to take an oath, that they have not given, promised, or engaged to give, any fee or reward to any advocate, upon account of his undertaking their cause." In these terms, and many others equally full and express,

* A court of justice.

† The decemviri seem to have been magistrates for the administration of justice, subordinate to the prætors, who (to give the English reader a general notion of their office) may be termed lords chief-justices, as the judges, here mentioned, were somewhat in the nature of our juries.

the lawyers are prohibited to make their profession venal. However, after the cause shall be decided, they are permitted to accept a gratuity of ten thousand sesterces.* The prætor for civil causes, being alarmed at the unexpected edict of Nepos, gave us this welcome relaxation, in order to take time to consider, whether he should follow the example. In the mean while, the town is much divided in its sentiments of this injunction; some extremely approving, and others as much condemning it. "We have gotten, it seems, at last," say the latter, with a sneer, "a redresser of abuses. But, pray, was there never any prætor before this man? and what are his pretensions, thus forwardly to set up for a reformer?" Others, on the contrary, say, that he has taken a very proper measure upon entering into his office; that he has paid obedience to the laws; considered the decrees of the senate; suppressed a most indecent traffic; and will not suffer the most honourable of all professions to be debased into a sordid commerce of lucre. These are the different reflections which are thrown out upon this occasion; but which side shall be thought to judge most rightly, the result alone will determine. It is the usual custom of the world (though a very unequitable rule of estimation) to pronounce an action to be either right or wrong, as it is attended with good or ill success: and accordingly you shall hear the very same conduct attributed to zeal or folly, to liberty or licentiousness, as the event happens to prove. Farewell.

* About L. 80 of our money.

THE LETTERS OF PLINY.

BOOK SIXTH.

LETTER I.

TO TYRO.

I WAS less sensible of your absence while you were in the country of the Piceni,* and I on the other side the Po,† than I find myself now that I am returned to Rome. Whether it be that the scene where we used to meet naturally excites a more passionate remembrance of you, or that the less distant we are from a friend, the more impatient we feel under the separation, (our desires for a favourite object rising in proportion to our nearer approach towards it,) I know not. But upon whatever principle this difference is to be accounted for, remove the uneasiness of it, I entreat you, by hastening hither; otherwise I shall return again into the country, which I too hastily left, were it only to make the experiment, whether, when you shall not find me at Rome, you will send the same affectionate regrets after *me*, as I have expressed respecting *you* in this letter. Farewell.

* The marquisate of Ancona. † At Comum.

LETTER II.

TO ARRIANUS.

I WILL not say I lament the death of Regulus, but, I confess, I sometimes miss him at the bar. The man, it must be owned, held the study of eloquence in high honour, and was indefatigable in his endeavours to become an orator. If, indeed, he could never leave off the ridiculous custom of anointing his right or left eye,* and wearing a white patch over one side or the other of his forehead, as he was to plead either for the plaintiff or defendant; if he always, with a most foolish superstition, consulted the soothsayers upon the event of every cause in which he was concerned; still all these absurdities proceeded from his profound veneration of eloquence. It was extremely convenient to be concerned in the same cause with him, as he always petitioned the court that his pleadings, and those of the advocates joined with him, might not be limited in point of time; and, also, as he never failed to procure an audience: for what could be more desirable, than, under the protection of an invidious request which you did not make yourself, and before an audience too which you had not the trouble of collecting,† to harangue without interruption, and as long as you thought proper? Nevertheless,

* This silly piece of superstition seems to have been peculiar to Regulus, and not of any general practice.

† This seems to allude to a custom which the author reprehends, Book xi. Letter 14.

Regulus did well to *depart*, though, indeed, he would have done much better had he made his exit sooner; since he might *now*, in the reign of a prince under whom he would have no opportunity of effecting his malevolent purposes, have continued to live on, without having it any longer in his power to be a public mischief. I need not scruple, therefore, I think, to say, I sometimes feel the loss of this man; for, since his death, the custom has prevailed of not allowing, nor, indeed, of asking, more than an hour or two to plead, and sometimes not above half that time. The truth is, our advocates take more pleasure in finishing a cause, than in defending it; and our judges had rather rise from the bench than sit upon it: such is their indolence, and such their disregard to the honour of eloquence, and the interest of justice! But are we wiser than our ancestors? are we more equitable than the laws, which grant so many hours, and days, and adjournments, to a cause? Were our forefathers slow of apprehension, and dull beyond measure? and are we more perspicuous in our oratory, more quick in our conceptions, or more scrupulous in our decisions, because we dispatch our causes in fewer hours than they took days to consider them? What a reproach is it, Regulus, that none could refuse to the importunity of thy vain-glorious solicitations, what few will yield even to the duty of their office! As for myself, whenever I sit upon the bench, (which is much oftener than I appear at the bar,) I always give the advocates as much time as they desire; for I look upon it as highly presuming, to pretend to guess, before a cause is heard, what time the

discussion will require, and to set limits to the examination of a question before one is acquainted with its full extent; especially as the first and most sacred duty of a judge is patience, which, indeed, is itself a very considerable part of justice. But this, it is objected, would give an opening to much impertinent superfluity: I grant it may; yet is it not better to hear too much, than not to hear enough? Besides, how shall you know that what an advocate has farther to offer will be superfluous, till you have heard him? But this, and many other public abuses, will be best reserved to a conversation when we meet; for I know your affection to the commonwealth inclines you to wish, that some means might be found to check at least those grievances, which would now be very difficult absolutely to remove. But, to turn to affairs of private concern, I hope all goes well in your family; mine remains in its usual situation. The happiness I enjoy becomes more acceptable to me by its continuance, and habit renders me less sensible of the infelicities I suffer. Farewell.

LETTER III.

TO VERUS.

I AM much obliged to you for undertaking the care of that little farm I gave to my nurse. It was worth, when I made her a present of it, an hundred thousand sesterces;* but the crops having since failed, it has sunk in its value; however, it

* About L. 800 of our money.

will thrive again, I doubt not, under your good management. But what I recommend to your attention is, not so much the land itself, (which yet I by no means except,) as the interest of my particular benefaction; for it is not more her concern than mine, to render it as advantageous as possible. Farewell.

LETTER IV.

TO CALPHURNIA.*

NEVER was business more uneasy to me, than when it prevented me not only from attending, but following you into Campania.† As at all times, so particularly now, I wish to be with you, that I may be a witness what progress you make in the recovery of your strength, and how the tranquillity, the amusements, and plenty of that charming country agrees with you. Were you in perfect health, yet I could ill support your absence; for even a moment's uncertainty of the welfare of those we tenderly love, is a situation of mind infinitely painful; but, at present, your sickness conspires with your absence to alarm me with a thousand disquietudes. I fear every thing that can befall you; and, as is usual with all under the same anxious apprehensions, suspect most, what I most dread. Let

* His wife.

† Where Fabatus, Calphurnia's grandfather, had a villa. This delightful country is celebrated by almost every classic author, and every modern traveller, for the fertility of its soil, the beauty of its landscape, and temperature of its air. "*Nihil mollius cælo*," says Florus, "*nihil uberius solo: denique bis floribus vernat.*"—Lib. i. 16.

me conjure you then to prevent my solicitude, by writing to me every day, and even twice a day. I shall be more easy, at least while I am reading your letters; though all my fears will again return the moment I have perused them. Farewell.

LETTER V.

TO URSUS.

I ACQUAINTED you in a former letter,* that Varenus obtained leave of the senate to send for his witnesses. This was thought, by many, extremely equitable, though some, with much obstinacy, maintained the contrary; particularly Licinius Nepos, who, at the following assembly of the senate, when the house was going upon other business, resumed this matter after it had been settled, and made a long speech upon the last decree. He concluded with moving, that the consuls might be desired to put the question, whether it was the sense of the senate, that, as in prosecutions founded upon the law concerning bribery and corruption, so in that relating to extortion, a clause should be added, empowering the defendant, as well as the informer, to summon and examine witnesses? This speech was looked upon, by some, as particularly ill-timed; they thought it strange that Nepos should let slip the proper opportunity of animadverting upon the decree, when it was under the consideration of the senate, and raise objections to a decision after it had been determined, and which he might have op-

* Book V. Letter 20.

posed when it was in debate. Jubentius Celsus, the prætor, very warmly reproved him, in a long speech, for presuming to correct the senate. Nepos answered him; Celsus replied; and neither of them were sparing of reflections on each other. But I forbear to repeat what I could not hear without regret; and am, therefore, so much the more displeased with some members of the senate, who ran from Nepos to Celsus, as one or the other was speaking, with the illiberal pleasure of listening to their mutual invectives; sometimes encouraging the one, sometimes the other, and sometimes both; immediately afterwards seeming to reconcile them, and then again animating them to the attack, as if they had been present at some ludicrous spectacle. And I could not observe without great concern, that they were mutually informed what each intended to urge against the other; for Celsus replied to Nepos, as Nepos did to Celsus, out of a writing they respectively held in their hands. This circumstance was occasioned by the indiscretion of their officious friends; and thus these two men abused one another, as if they had previously agreed in what terms to express their resentment. Farewell.

LETTER VI.

TO FUNDANUS.

I NEVER wished more to see you in Rome than at this time, and I entreat you, therefore, to come hither; for I want an associate to share with

me in voting and soliciting, respecting an affair in which I very warmly interest myself. Julius Naso is a candidate for an office of considerable honour; he has many competitors, and some of them of great merit; upon which account, as his success will be the more glorious, so it will be the more difficult to secure. I am much divided between hope and fear; and the anxiety I undergo upon this occasion is so great, that I almost forget I am of consular rank, and feel as many uneasy apprehensions as if I were again to become a candidate for every office I have filled. This zeal is justly due to Naso, in return to the long affection he has borne for me. The friendship I entertain for him did not, it is true, descend to him by inheritance; for his father and I were at too great a distance in point of age to admit of any intimacy between us; yet, from my earliest youth, I was taught to look up to the latter with the highest veneration. He was not only an admirer of the polite arts, but the patron of all who cultivated them; as he was a frequent auditor also of Quinctilian and Nicetes, to whom I was at that time a disciple. He was, in short, a man of singular worth and eminence, and one whose memory ought extremely to facilitate the advancement of his son to the honours of the state. But there are numbers in the senate who never knew his father; and although there are many, too, who were well acquainted with him, yet they consist chiefly of that kind of men who never extend their regards beyond the living. For this reason, Naso, without relying upon the character of his father, which is likely to prove of more honour than service to him, must

exert the utmost of his endeavours to recommend himself by his own merit; and, indeed, his conduct has ever been as guarded as if he had governed it with a particular view to the present occasion. The many friendships he has acquired, he has ever cultivated with the strictest fidelity; and particularly singled me out as the object of his esteem and imitation, from the first moment he was capable of forming any judgment of the world. Whenever I plead, he anxiously attends me, and is always of the party when I recite; as he is ever the first to enquire after my works. His brother had the same attachment to me. But he has lost that excellent brother! and it shall be my part to supply his place. It is with grief I reflect upon the immature death of the one, as I lament that the other should be deprived of the assistance of so valuable a relation, and left to depend only on the zeal of his friends. It is that consideration which induces me earnestly to entreat you to return to Rome, and unite your suffrage with mine. It will be of singular advantage to the cause in which I am embarked, if you would appear in it, and become a joint-solicitor with me; for I know your credit and influence is so great, that I am persuaded your applications will render mine more effectual, even with my own friends. Let me request you, then, to break through all obstacles, if any may happen to lie in your way. I have a right to claim your assistance in this conjuncture; your friendship to me, and my credit, both require it. I have undertaken to support the interest of Naso, and the world knows it; the pursuit and the hazard, therefore, is become my

own. In a word, if he obtains this post, all the honour will be his; but if he should be rejected, the repulse will be mine. Farewell.

LETTER VII.

TO CALPHURNIA.*

YOU kindly tell me, my absence very sensible affects you, and that your only consolation is in conversing with my works, which you frequently substitute in my place by your side. How agreeable is it to me to know, that you thus wish for my company! and support yourself under the want of it by these consolations! In return, I entertain myself with reading over your letters again and again, and am continually taking them up, as if I had but just then received them; but, alas! they only serve to make me more feelingly regret your absence; for how amiable must *her* conversation be, whose letters have so many charms! Let me receive them, however, as often as possible, notwithstanding there is always some mixture of pain in the pleasure they afford me, as they render me the more sensible of the loss I suffer by my absence. Farewell.

LETTER VIII.

TO PRISCUS.

YOU know and esteem Attilius Crescens; who, indeed, is there, of any rank or worth, that

* Pliny's wife.

does not? For myself, I profess to have a friendship for him much superior to the common attachments of the world. The places of our nativity are separated only by a day's journey, and we conceived an affection for each other when we were very young; a season when connections of that kind strike the deepest root. Ours improved by years; and so far from being weakened, that it was confirmed by our riper judgments, as those who know us best can witness. He takes pleasure in boasting every where of my friendship; as I do to let the world know, that his honours, his ease, and his interest, are my peculiar concern: insomuch, that, upon his expressing to me, lately, an apprehension that he might receive some insults from a certain person who was entering upon the office of tribune of the people, I could not forbear answering,

> Long as Achilles breathes this vital air,
> To touch thy head no impious hand shall dare.*

I mention this, to show you that I look upon every injury offered to Attilius, as done to myself. But you will be impatient to hear what all this tends to. You must know, then, Valerius Varus, at his death, owed Attilius a sum of money. Though I am acquainted with Maximus, who inherits the estate of Varus, yet there is a much closer friendship between him and you. I beg, therefore, and conjure you by all the affection you feel for me, to take care that Attilius is not only paid the principal which is due to him, but the whole long arrears of interest. He neither covets the property of others,

* Hom. Iliad. lib. i. ver. 88.

nor neglects the care of his own; and as he is not engaged in any lucrative profession, he has nothing to depend upon but his frugality; for as to the polite arts, in which he greatly excels, he pursues them merely from motives of pleasure and fame. In such a situation, the slightest loss presses hard upon a man, and the more so because he has no opportunities of repairing any injury that affects his fortune. Assist us then, I entreat you, in this difficulty, and suffer me still to enjoy the pleasure of his sprightly and diverting conversation; for I cannot bear to see the cheerfulness of my friend overclouded, whose mirth and good-humour dissipates every gloom of melancholy in my own bosom. In a word, as you are well acquainted with the entertaining gaiety of temper which Attilius possesses, I hope you will not suffer any injury to discompose and sour it. You may judge by the warmth of his affection, how bitter his resentments would prove; for a generous and great mind can ill brook an injury when it is joined with contempt. But though *he* could pass it over, yet cannot I; on the contrary, I shall look upon it as a wrong and indignity done to myself, and resent it as one offered to my friend; that is, with double warmth. But, after all, why this air of threatening? rather let me end in the same style I began, by earnestly conjuring you so to act in this affair, that neither Attilius may have reason to imagine (what I should greatly lament) that I neglect his interest, nor that I may have occasion to charge you with being careless of mine; and I certainly shall not, if you have the same regard for the latter as I have for the former. Farewell.

LETTER IX.

TO TACITUS.

WHEN you recommend Julius Naso to me, respecting the office for which he is a candidate, you are recommending me to myself. However I forgive you; you would have received the same recommendation from me, had you been at Rome, and I absent; in the cause of a friend, one is apt to think nothing is immaterial. Nevertheless, I advise you to address your solicitations to others, assuring yourself I will take an equal share with you in all your applications on his behalf, and support them with my best and warmest endeavours. Farewell.

LETTER X.

TO ALBINUS.

I WAS lately at Alsium,* where my wife's mother has a villa, which once belonged to Virginius Rufus.† The place renewed in my mind the sorrowful remembrance of that great and excellent man. He was extremely fond of this retirement, and used to call it *the nest of his old age*. Wherever I turned my eyes, I missed my worthy friend. I felt an inclination to see his monument, but I repented of my curiosity; for I had the mortification to find it remained still unfinished, not from any

* Now Alzia, not far from Como.

† See an account of him in Book ii. Letter 1.

difficulty of the work itself, which is very plain, or rather, indeed, mean; but through the neglect of him to whose care the erection was entrusted. I could not see, without a concern mixed with indignation, the remains of a man, whose fame filled the whole world, lie for ten years after his death without an inscription or a name. He had, however, directed *that* divine and immortal achievement of his life to be recorded upon his tomb in the following lines:

Here Rufus lies, who Vindex's arms* withstood,
Not for himself, but for his country's good.

But a faithful friend is so rarely to be found, and the dead are so soon forgotten, that we shall be under the necessity of erecting our own sepulchres, and anticipate the office of our heirs. For who has not reason to fear, that what has happened to Virginius, may be his own case? an indignity which is of so much the more public notoriety, as it falls upon a man of his illustrious virtues.

LETTER XI.

TO MAXIMUS.

HOW happy a day did I lately pass! when, having been called by the prefect† of Rome to his assistance in a certain cause, I had the pleasure to

* See p. 63. note.

† An officer somewhat in the nature of the lord-mayor among us. He preceded all other city magistrates; having power to receive appeals from the inferior courts, and to decide almost all causes within the limits of Rome, or a hundred miles round.

hear Fuscus Salinator, and Numidius Quadratus, plead on opposite sides. They are both of them young men of extraordinary hopes, and possess talents which will one day, I am persuaded, render them an ornament not only to the present age, but to literature itself. They discovered, in the course of his trial, that they were actuated by principles of strict probity, and inflexible courage; and I had great satisfaction in remarking, that their garb* was decent, their elocution distinct, their voice manly, their memory strong,† and that their ele-

* See Letter 3. Book II. note.

† Strength of memory seems to have been a quality in singular esteem among the Romans; Pliny often mentioning it, when he draws the characters of his friends, as in the number of their most shining talents. Quinctilian considers it as the measure of genius: "*Tantum ingenii*," says he, "*quantum memoriæ*." The extraordinary perfection in which some of the ancients are said to have possessed this important faculty, is almost incredible. Our author speaks, in a former letter, of a Greek philosopher of his acquaintance, who, after having delivered a long harangue extempore, would immediately repeat it again, without losing a single word. Seneca says, he could, in his youth, repeat two thousand names, exactly in the same order they were read to him; and that, to try the strength of his memory, the audience who attended the same professor with himself, would each of them give him a verse, which he would instantly repeat, beginning with the last, and so on to the first, to the amount of two hundred. He tells a pleasant story upon this occasion, of a certain poet, who having recited a poem in public, a person who was present claimed it for his own, and, in proof of its being so, immediately repeated it word for word, which the real author was not capable of doing.—*Sen. Controv.* lib. 1. *sub. init.* Numberless instances might be collected from the ancients to the same purpose. To mention only a few more: it is said of Themistocles, that he made himself master of the Persian language in a year's time; of Mithridates, that he understood as many languages as he commanded nations, that is, no less than twenty-

vated genius was guided by an equal solidity of judgment. To this I will add, that I took singular pleasure in observing, that while they looked upon me as their guide and model, they appeared, in the opinion of the audience, as my imitators and rivals. It was a day (I cannot but repeat it again) which afforded me the most exquisite happiness, and which I shall ever mark with the fairest white.* What, indeed, could be either more delightful to me on the public account, than to see two such noble youths building their fame and glory upon the polite arts; or more desirable upon my own, than to be marked out as a worthy example to them in their pursuits of virtue? May the gods still grant me the continuance of that pleasure! And may every man, who thinks me deserving of his imitation, far exceed the model he has chosen! Farewell.

LETTER XII.

TO FABATUS.†

MOST certainly you ought to have no reserve in recommending to me such persons whom

two; of Cyrus, that he retained the names of every single soldier in his army.—*Quint.* l. 11. 2. But the finest compliment that ever was paid to a good memory, is what Tully says of Julius Cæsar, in his oration for Ligarius, that "he never forgot any thing but an injury."

* Alluding to a custom of the Romans, who marked the fortunate days in their calendar with *white*, and the unfortunate with *black*.

† His wife Calphurnia's grandfather.

you judge worthy of your patronage; for nothing is more agreeable to your character, than to be as extensively beneficial as possible; nor to mine, than to interest myself in every thing in which you are concerned. Be assured, therefore, I shall give all the assistance in my power to Vectius Priscus, especially in what relates to my peculiar province,—I mean the centumviral court.

You desire me to forget those letters which you wrote to me, you say, in the openness of your heart; but, believe me, there is none I remember with more satisfaction. They are very pleasing proofs of the share I enjoy of your affection, since you use the same free expostulations with me, that you would with your own son. And, to confess the truth, they are so much the more agreeable, as I had nothing to accuse myself of upon your account; for I had very exactly performed your requests. I entreat you, again and again, still to rebuke me with the same freedom, whenever you imagine (and, I trust, it will be only imagination) that I fail in my good offices towards you; it will afford *me* the pleasure of receiving a strong mark of your affectionate regard; and *you*, that of being convinced I did not deserve the reproach. Farewell.

LETTER XIII.

TO URSUS.

'WAS ever man so vexed and oppressed as my friend Varenus, who has been obliged to enter into a fresh defence, and, as it were, to petition

again for what he had, with much difficulty and contention, already obtained?* The Bithynians have had the confidence, not only to complain to the consuls of the decree of the senate, but also to inveigh against it to the emperor, who happened to be absent when it passed. Cæsar† referred them again to the senate, where they still persisted in their remonstrances. Claudius Capito ventured to be counsel for them; and I will add, with more irreverence than true courage, as he undertook to arraign the justice of a decree of the senate, in the face of that august assembly. Fronto Catius replied to him with great force and spirit; as, indeed, the whole body of the senate conducted themselves in this affair with wonderful dignity: for even those who opposed the petition of Varenus, when it was first brought before the house, thought that, after it had been granted, it ought not to be reversed. While the question, indeed, was under debate, they justly supposed, that every member was at liberty to give his sentiments; but when once determined by the majority, they looked upon it to be then the common concern of each senator to support. This was the general opinion of the whole house, Acilius Rufus only excepted, and seven or eight more, who persevered in their former vote; in which small party there were some, whose occasional solemnity, or rather affectation of solemnity, appeared extremely ridiculous. You will judge, from hence, what a warm battle we are likely to have, since this prelude, as I may call it, has occasioned so much contention. Farewell.

* See Book V. Letter 20. † Trajan.

LETTER XIV.

TO MAURICUS.

IN compliance with your earnest invitation, I consent to make you a visit at your Formian villa, but upon condition that you put yourself to no inconvenience upon my account; a condition which I shall also strictly observe on my part. It is not the pleasures of your sea and your coast, it is your company, it is retirement, it is freedom, that I desire to enjoy: otherwise, I might as well remain in Rome; for there is no medium worth accepting, between giving up one's time wholly to the disposal of others, or reserving it entirely in one's own power; at least, for myself, I declare I can relish no mixtures of any kind. Farewell.

LETTER XV.

TO ROMANUS.

I BELIEVE you were not present at a very droll circumstance which lately happened. I was not, indeed, a witness to it myself; however, I had an early account of what passed. Passienus Paulus, an eminent Roman knight, and particularly conspicuous for his literary abilities, has a genius for elegiac poetry; a talent which runs in the family, for Propertius was his relation as well as his countryman. He was lately reciting a poem which opened thus:

Prisous, at thy command——

Whereupon Priscus, who happened to be present as a particular friend of the poet's, cried out, "But he is mistaken, I did not command him." Think what a roar of laughter this occasioned. The intellects of Priscus, you must know, are thought to be somewhat disordered; however, as he enters into the common offices of life, is called to consultations, and publicly acts as a lawyer, this behaviour was the more remarkable and ridiculous; and, in fact, Paulus was a good deal disconcerted by his friend's absurdity. You see it is necessary for those who are solicitous to recite their works in public, to take care that the audience, as well as the author, should be of sound intellects. Farewell.

LETTER XVI.

TO TACITUS.

YOUR request, that I would send you an account of my uncle's death, in order to transmit a more exact relation of it to posterity, merits my acknowledgments; for, if the glorious circumstances which occasioned this accident shall be celebrated by your pen, the manner of his exit will be rendered for ever illustrious. Notwithstanding he perished by a misfortune, which, as it involved at the same time a most beautiful country in ruins, and destroyed so many populous cities, seems to promise him an everlasting remembrance; notwithstanding he has himself composed many works which will descend to the latest times; yet, I am persuaded, the mentioning of him in your immortal writings will great-

ly contribute to eternize his name. Happy I deem those to be, whom the gods have distinguished with the abilities either of performing such actions as are worthy of being related, or of relating them in a manner worthy of being read; but doubly happy are they, who are blessed with both these uncommon endowments; and in that number my uncle, as his own writings and your history will prove, may justly be ranked. It is with extreme willingness, therefore, I execute your commands; and I should, indeed, have claimed the task if you had not enjoined it. He was, at that time, with the fleet under his command, at Misenum.* On the 24th of August, about one in the afternoon, my mother desired him to observe a cloud which appeared of a very unusual size and shape. He had just returned from enjoying the benefit of the sun, and, after bathing in cold water, and taking a slight repast, was retired to his study; he immediately arose, and went out upon an eminence, from whence he might more distinctly view this very singular phenomenon. It was not at that distance discernible from what mountain this cloud issued, but it was found afterwards to proceed from Vesuvius.†

* In the gulf of Naples.

† About six miles distant from Naples. This dreadful eruption happened A. D. 79, in the first year of the emperor Titus. Martial has a pretty epigram upon this subject, in which he gives us a view of Vesuvius, as it appeared before this terrible conflagration broke out:

Hic est pampineis viridis Vesuvius umbris,
Presserat hic madidos nobilis uva lacus.
Hæc juga, quàm Nisæ colles, plus Bacchus amavit;
Hoc nuper Satyri monte dedêre choros.

I cannot give you a more exact description of its figure, than by resembling it to that of a pine-tree; for it shot up a great height in the form of a tall trunk, which spread at the top into a sort of branches; occasioned, I suppose, either that the force of the internal vapour which impelled the cloud upwards, decreased in strength as it advanced, or that the cloud, being pressed back by its own weight, expanded itself in the manner I have mentioned; it appeared sometimes bright, and sometimes dark and spotted, as it was either more or less impregnated with earth and cinders. This uncommon appearance excited my uncle's philosophical curiosity to take a nearer view of it. He accordingly ordered a light vessel to be prepared, and offered me the liberty, if I thought proper, to attend him. I rather chose to continue the employment in which I was engaged; for, it happened, that he

Hæc Veneris sedes, Lacedæmone gratior illi;
Hic locus Herculeo nomine clarus erat;
Cuncta jacent flammis, et tristi mersa favilla;
Nec vellent superi hoc licuisse sibi.

Lib. IV. Ep. 44.

Here verdant vines o'erspread Vesuvio's sides;
The generous grape *here* poured her purple tides.
This Bacchus loved beyond his native scene;
Here dancing satyrs joyed to trip the green.
Far more than Sparta *this* in Venus' grace;
And great Alcides once renowned the place.—
Now flaming embers spread dire waste around,
And Gods regret that Gods can thus confound.

It seems probable, that this was the first eruption of mount Vesuvius, at least of any consequence; as it is certain we have no particular accounts of any preceding one. Dio, indeed, and other ancient authors, speak of a prior eruption; but still they describe it as covered with trees and vines, so that the foregoing must have been inconsiderable.

had given me a certain writing to copy.* As he was going out of the house with his tablets in his hand, he was met by the mariners belonging to the gallies stationed at Retina, from which they had fled in the utmost terror; for that port being situated at the foot of Vesuvius, they had no other way to escape than by sea. They conjured him, therefore, not to proceed and expose his life to imminent and inevitable danger. In compliance with their advice, he changed his original intention, and, instead of gratifying his philosophical spirit, he resigned it to the more magnanimous principle of aiding the distressed. With this view, he ordered the fleet immediately to put to sea, and went himself on board with an intention of assisting not only Retina, but the several other towns which stood thick upon that beautiful coast. Hastening to the place, therefore, from whence others fled with the utmost terror, he steered his direct course to the point of danger, and with so much calmness and presence of mind, as to be able to make and dictate his observations upon the appearance and progress of that dreadful scene. He was now so near the mountain, that the cinders, which grew thicker and hotter the more he advanced, fell into the ships, together with pumice-stones, and black pieces of burning rock; they were likewise in danger, not only of being a-ground by the sudden retreat of the sea,

* The manuscript and printed copies vary extremely from each other as to the reading of this passage. The conjecture of Cortes seems the most satisfactory, as it comes nearest the most approved manuscripts, and best falls in with the context; it is therefore adopted in the translation.

but also from the vast fragments which rolled down from the mountains, and obstructed all the shore. Here he stopped, to consider whether he should return back; to which the pilot advising him, "Fortune," said he, "befriends the brave; steer to Pomponianus." Pomponianus was then at Stabiæ,* separated by a gulf, which the sea, after several insensible windings, forms upon that shore. Pomponianus had already sent his baggage on board; for though he was not at that time in actual danger, yet, being within the view of it, and, indeed, extremely near, he was determined, if it should in the least increase, to put to sea as soon as the wind should change. It was favourable, however, for carrying my uncle to Pomponianus, whom he found in the greatest consternation; and embracing him with tenderness, he encouraged and exhorted him to keep up his spirits. The more to dissipate his fears, he ordered his servants, with an air of unconcern, to carry him to the baths; and, after having bathed, he sat down to supper with great, or at least (what is equally heroic) with all the appearance of cheerfulness. In the mean while, the fire from Vesuvius flamed forth from several parts of the mountain with great violence; which the darkness of the night contributed to render still more visible and dreadful. But my uncle, in order to calm the apprehensions of his friend, assured him it was only the conflagration of the villages, which the country people had abandoned. After this he retired to rest, and it is most certain, he was so little discomposed as to fall into a deep sleep; for, being corpu-

* Now called *Castel è Mar di Stabia*, in the gulf of Naples.

lent, and breathing hard, the attendants in the antichamber actually heard him snore. The court which led to his apartment being now almost filled with stones and ashes, it would have been impossible for him, if he had continued there any longer, to have made his way out; it was thought proper, therefore, to awaken him. He got up, and joined Pomponianus, and the rest of the company, who had not been sufficiently unconcerned to think of going to bed. They consulted together whether it would be most prudent to trust to the houses, which now shook from side to side with frequent and violent concussions, or flee to the open fields, where the calcined stones and cinders, though levigated indeed, yet fell in large showers, and threatened them with instant destruction. In this distress, they resolved for the fields, as the less dangerous situation of the two; a resolution which, while the rest of the company were hurried into by their fears, my uncle embraced upon cool and deliberate consideration. They went out, then, having pillows tied upon their heads with napkins; and this was their whole defence against the storm of stones that fell around them. It was now day every where else, but *there* a deeper darkness prevailed than in the blackest night; which, however, was in some degree dissipated by torches and other lights of various kinds. They thought it expedient to go down farther upon the shore, in order to observe if they might safely put out to sea; but they found the waves still running extremely high and boisterous. There my uncle, having drunk a draught or two of cold water, laid himself down upon a sail-cloth which was spread

for him; when immediately the flames, preceded by a strong smell of sulphur, dispersed the rest of the company, and obliged him to rise. He raised himself up, with the assistance of two of his servants, and instantly fell down dead; suffocated, I conjecture, by some gross and noxious vapour, as having always had weak lungs, and being frequently subject to a difficulty of breathing. As soon as it was light again, which was not till the third day after this melancholy accident, his body was found entire, and without any marks of violence, exactly in the same posture in which he fell, and looking more like a man asleep than dead. During all this time, my mother and I, who were at Misenum——* But as this has no connection with your history, so your enquiry went no farther than concerning my uncle's death; with that, therefore, I will put an end to my letter. Suffer me only to add, that I have faithfully related to you what I was either an eye-witness of myself, or received immediately after the accident happened, and before there was time to vary the truth. You will choose out of this narrative such circumstance as shall be most suitable to your purpose; for there is a great difference between writing a letter, and composing a history; between addressing a friend, and addressing the public. Farewell.

* See this account continued, Letter 20. of this Book.

LETTER XVII.

TO RESTITUTUS.

I CANNOT forbear venting my displeasure before you in a letter, since I have no opportunity of doing so in person, against a certain behaviour which gave me some offence in an assembly where I was lately present. The company was entertained with a recital of a very finished performance; but there were two or three persons among the audience, men of great genius in their own, and a few of their friends' estimation, who sate like so many deaf and dumb mutes, without moving a lip or a hand, or once rising from their seats, even to shift their posture. But to what purpose, in the name of good sense, all this wondrous air of wisdom and solemnity, or rather, indeed, (to give it its true appellation,) of this fastidious gravity? Is it not downright folly, or even madness, thus to lose a whole day merely to commit a piece of rudeness, and leave *him* an enemy, whom you visited as a *friend?* Is a man conscious that he possesses a superior power of eloquence than the person whom he attends on such an occasion? so much the rather ought he to guard against every appearance of envy, as a passion that always implies a mortifying sense of inferiority. But, whatever a man's talent may be, whether greater, or equal, or less than his friend's, still it is his interest to give him the approbation he deserves; if greater, or equal, because the higher his glory rises whom you equal or excel, the more considerable yours

must necessarily be; if less, because if one of more exalted abilities does not meet with applause, neither possibly can you. For my own part, I respect and honour all who discover any degree of merit in the difficult and laborious art of oratory; for eloquence is a high and haughty dame, who scorns to reside with those that despise her. But perhaps you are not of this opinion! yet who more reveres this glorious talent, or is a more candid judge of it, than yourself? In confidence of which, I have ventured to declare to you the late indignation I felt, as not doubting you would have joined with me in the same sentiments. Farewell.

LETTER XVIII.

TO SABINUS.

I WILL endeavour, as you desire, to undertake the cause of the Firmiani,* though I have at present many affairs upon my hands; for I should be extremely glad to oblige so illustrious a colony by my good offices, as well as to render you an acceptable service. How, indeed, can I refuse any thing to you, who profess to have sought my friendship as your support and ornament; especially when your request is on behalf of your country? For what can be more honourable than the entreaties of a patriot, or more efficacious than those of a friend? You may engage for me, therefore, to your, or rather, as I should now call them, *our* friends the Fir-

* Inhabitants of a city in Italy called *Firmo*, in the marquisite of Ancona.

miani. And though their own illustrious character did nor persuade me that they deserve my care and patronage, yet I could not but conceive a very high opinion of their merit, from seeing a man of your distinguished virtues choose to reside among them.

LETTER XIX.

TO NEPOS.

ARE you informed, that the price of lands is considerably risen; especially of those which lie about Rome? This sudden advance was occasioned by a practice which has been much complained of, and which drew from the senate, at the last assembly for the election of magistrates, a very laudable decree, whereby the candidates are prohibited from giving the electors any treat, present, or money whatsoever. The two former of these abuses were practised with as little reserve as discretion; the latter, though carried on with more secrecy, was, however, equally notorious. Our friend Homulus, taking advantage of this favourable disposition of the senate, instead of delivering his sentiments upon the point in debate, moved, that the consuls should acquaint the emperor, that it was the unanimous desire of the house to have this abuse reformed, and address him to interpose his vigilance and authority for the removal of this grievance, as he already had of every other. The emperor was accordingly pleased to comply, and published an edict to restrain those infamous largesses; directing, that no person shall be admitted as a candidate who has

not a third part of his estate in land; deeming it highly indecent, (as no doubt it is,) that those who aspire to dignities in the state, should look upon Rome and Italy rather like travellers who are passing through it, than as their proper country, and in which the principal part of their possessions lay. This edict has occasioned a general struggle among those who aim at any office, to buy up every thing which they hear is to be sold; by which means the value of lands is greatly increased. If, therefore, you are inclined to dispose of any part of your estate here, or of making purchases elsewhere, you have now a good opportunity; for, in order to buy in Italy, these candidates are obliged to sell their estates in the provinces. Farewell.

LETTER XX.

TO CORNELIUS TACITUS.

THE letter which, in compliance with your request, I wrote to you, concerning the death of my uncle, has raised, it seems, your curiosity to know what terrors and dangers attended me while I continued at Misenum; for there, I think, the account in my former broke off:

Though my shocked soul recoils, my tongue shall tell.*

My uncle having left us, I continued the employment which prevented my going with him, till it was time to bathe; after which I went to supper, and then fell into a short and unquiet sleep. There

* Virgil. Pitt's Translation.

had been, during many days before, some shocks of an earthquake, which the less alarmed us as they are frequent in Campania; but they were so particularly violent that night, that they not only shook every thing about us, but seemed, indeed, to threaten total destruction. My mother flew to my chamber, where she found me rising in order to awaken her. We went out into a small court belonging to the house, which separated the sea from the buildings. As I was at that time but eighteen years of age, I know not whether I should call my behaviour, in this perilous conjuncture, courage or rashness; but I took up Livy, and amused myself with turning over that author, and even making extracts from him, as if I had been perfectly at my ease. While we were in this situation, a friend of my uncle's, who was just come from Spain to pay him a visit, joined us, and observing me sitting by my mother with a book in my hand, reproved her patience, and my security; nevertheless, I still went on with my author. It was now morning, but the light was exceedingly faint and languid; the buildings all around us tottered, and, though we stood upon open ground, yet, as the place was narrow and confined, there was no remaining without imminent danger; we therefore resolved to leave the town. The people followed us in the utmost consternation, and (as to a mind distracted with terror, every suggestion seems more prudent than its own) pressed in great crowds about us in our way out. Being advanced at a convenient distance from the houses, we stood still, in the midst of a most hazardous and tremendous scene. The chariots which we had or-

dered to be drawn out, were so agitated backwards and forwards, though upon the most level ground, that we could not keep them steady, even by supporting them with large stones. The sea seemed to roll back upon itself, and to be driven from its banks by the convulsive motion of the earth; it is certain, at least, the shore was considerably enlarged, and several sea-animals were left upon it. On the other side a black and dreadful cloud bursting with an igneous serpentine vapour, darted out a long train of fire, resembling flashes of lightning, but much larger. Upon this, our Spanish friend, whom I mentioned above, addressing himself to my mother and me, with great warmth and earnestness: "If your brother and your uncle," said he, "is safe, he certainly wishes you may be so too; but if he perished, it was his desire, no doubt, that you might both survive him: why, therefore, do you delay your escape a moment?" We could never think of our own safety, we replied, while we were uncertain of his; upon which our friend left us, and withdrew from the danger with the utmost precipitation. Soon afterwards, the cloud seemed to descend, and cover the whole ocean; as, indeed, it entirely hid the island of Caprea,* and the promontory of Misenum. My mother conjured me to make my escape at any rate, which, as I was young, I might easily effect; as for herself, she said, her age and corpulency rendered all attempts of that sort impossible; however she would willingly meet death, if she could have the satisfaction of seeing

* An island near Naples, now called *Capri*.

that she was not the occasion of mine. But I absolutely refused to leave her, and, taking her by the hand, I led her on; she complied with great reluctance, and not without many reproaches to herself for being the occasion of retarding my flight. The ashes now began to fall upon us, though in no great quantity. I turned my head, and observed behind us a thick smoke, which came rolling after us like a torrent. I proposed, while we had yet any light, to turn out of the high road, lest she should be pressed to death in the dark, by the crowd that followed us. We had scarcely stepped out of the path, when darkness overspread us, not like that of a cloudy night, or when there is no moon, but of a room when it is shut up, and all the lights extinct. Nothing, then, was to be heard but the shrieks of women, the screams of children, and the cries of men; some calling for their children, others for their parents, others for their husbands, and only distinguishing each other by their voices; one lamenting his own fate, another that of his family; some wishing to die, from the very fear of dying; some lifting their hands to the gods; but the greater part imagining that the last and eternal night was come, which was to destroy both the gods* and the world together. Among these there were some who augmented the real terrors by imaginary ones, and made the frighted multitude falsely believe that Misenum was actually in flames. At length, a

* The Stoic and Epicurean philosophers held, that the world was to be destroyed by fire, and all things fall again into original chaos; not excepting even the national gods themselves from the destruction of this general conflagration.

glimmering light appeared, which we imagined to be rather the forerunner of an approaching burst of flames, (as in fact it was,) than the return of day; however, the fire fell at a distance from us: then again we were immersed in thick darkness, and a heavy shower of ashes rained upon us, which we were obliged every now and then to shake off, otherwise we should have been overwhelmed and buried in the heap. I might boast, that, during all this scene of horror, not a sigh, or expression of fear, escaped from me, had not my support been founded on that miserable, though strong, consolation, that all mankind were involved in the same calamity, and that I imagined I was perishing with the world itself. At last, this terrible darkness was dissipated by degrees, like a cloud, or smoke; the real day returned, and even the sun appeared, though very faintly, and as when an eclipse is coming on. Every object that presented itself to our eyes (which were extremely weakened) seemed changed, being covered with white ashes,* as with a deep snow. We returned to Misenum, where we refreshed ourselves as well as we could, and passed an anxious night between hope and fear; though, indeed, with a much larger share of the latter; for the earth still continued to shake, while several enthusiastic persons ran wildly among the people, throwing out terrifying predictions, and making a kind of frantic sport of their own and their *friends'*

* Mr. Addison, in his account of Mount Vesuvio, observes, that the air of the place is so very much impregnated with saltpetre, that one can scarce find a stone which has not the top white with it.—*Travels*, 182.

wretched situation. However, my mother and I, notwithstanding the danger we had passed, and that which still threatened us, had no intention of leaving Misenum, till we should receive some account of my uncle.——

And now, you will read this narrative without any view of inserting it in your history, of which it is by no means worthy; and, indeed, you must impute it to your own request, if it should appear not to deserve even the trouble of a letter. Farewell.

LETTER XXI.

TO CANINIUS.

THOUGH I am an admirer of the ancients, yet I am far from despising, as some affect, the genius of the moderns; nor can I suppose that nature, in these latter ages, is so worn out, as to be incapable of any valuable production. On the contrary, I have lately had the pleasure of hearing Virginius Romanus read, to a few select friends, a comedy so happily formed in the spirit of the ancients, that it may hereafter be considered as a model. I know not whether the author is in the number of your acquaintance; I am sure, at least, he ought to be, as he is greatly distinguished by the probity of his manners, the elegance of his genius, and the variety of his compositions. He has written some very agreeable pieces, of the burlesque kind, in Iambics, with much delicacy, wit, and humour, and I will add, too, even eloquence; for every species of composition, which is perfect in its kind, may, with

propriety, be termed eloquent. He has also published some comedies after the manner of Menander, and other approved authors of that age, which deserve to be ranked with those of Plautus and Terence. He has now, for the first time, attempted the ancient comedy,* but in such a manner as to show, he is a perfect master in this way. Strength and majesty, delicacy and softness, elegance and wit, are the distinguishing graces of this performance. He places virtuous characters in the most amiable point of view, and exposes vicious ones with the warmest indignation; whenever he makes use of feigned names, it is with great propriety, as he employs real ones with equal justness. In respect only to myself, I should say he has erred through an excess of friendship, if I did not know that fiction is the privilege of poets. In a word, I will insist upon his letting me have the copy, that I may send it to you for your perusal, or rather that you may get it by heart; for I am well persuaded, when you have once taken it up, you will not easily lay it down. Farewell.

* With regard to the various changes and revolutions which the Grecian comedy had undergone, it was distinguished into three kinds, viz. the *ancient*, which was founded upon real facts, and persons pointed out by their proper names; the *middle*, where the subject was real, but the names fictitious; the *new*, wherein both the names and the action are imaginary. Of the *first* model was Aristophanes; upon whose general manner, it is probable, Romanus formed his comedy here mentioned; but, as he appears to have introduced both true and invented names in the drama in question, it seems to have been of the *mixed* kind.

LETTER XXII.

TO TYRO.

AN affair has lately been transacted here, which nearly concerns those who shall hereafter be appointed governors of provinces, as well as every man who too incautiously trusts his friends. Lustricus Bruttianus, having detected his lieutenant, Montanus Atticinus, in several flagrant delinquencies, accused him to the emperor. Atticinus, on the other hand, added to his guilt, by instituting a groundless prosecution against the friend whose confidence he had abused. A hearing was appointed, and I was elected one of the assessors at his trial. Both parties pleaded their own cause, and, in a summary way, confined themselves strictly to the articles of the charge; a method by much the shortest of discovering the truth. Bruttianus, as a proof of the unreserved confidence he had reposed in his friend, and that nothing but absolute necessity could have extorted from him this complaint, produced his will, written by the hand of Atticinus. He then proceeded to open the charge, and clearly proved him guilty of the most infamous conduct. Atticinus, after some vain efforts to justify himself, withdrew; but his defence appeared as weak as his accusation was wicked. It was proved, that he had bribed a slave belonging to the secretary of Bruttianus, and, by that means, got into his possession his register-book, which he erased, and then made this his villanous act the foundation of a charge

against his friend. The emperor's conduct in this trial was extremely noble. Without collecting the voices with respect to Bruttianus, he proceeded immediately to take them only in relation to Atticinus, who was, accordingly, condemned to banishment. Bruttianus was acquitted not only with a very full and honourable testimony of his integrity, but with the credit of having behaved in this affair with great firmness. And, indeed, after having vindicated his own character in few words, he supported his charge against Atticinus with much spirit; and approved himself no less a man of fortitude than of honesty. I send you this account not only as a caution for your behaviour in the government you have obtained, and as a hint to depend upon yourself as much as possible, without relying too far upon your friends; but that you may be assured, if you should happen to be imposed upon in the execution of your office, (which heaven avert!) you will readily meet with justice here. However, that you may stand in no need of it, let me entreat you to exert the utmost circumspection and vigilance; for the satisfaction of being redressed, cannot compensate the mortification of having been deceived. Farewell.

LETTER XXIII.

TO TRIARIUS.

I CONSENT to undertake the cause which you so earnestly recommend to me; but glorious and honourable as it may be, I will not be your coun-

sel without a fee. Is it possible, you will say, that my friend Pliny should be so mercenary? It is; and I insist upon a reward which will do me more honour than the most disinterested patronage. I request you then, and, indeed, I make it a previous condition, that Cremutius Ruso may be joined with me as counsel in this cause. This is a practice which I have frequently observed with respect to several distinguished youths; as I take infinite pleasure in presenting young men of merit to the bar, and introducing them to the notice of fame. But if ever I owed this good office to any man, it is certainly to Ruso, not only upon account of his family, but his warm affection to me; and it would afford me a very singular satisfaction to have an opportunity of seeing him draw the attention of the audience in the same court, and the same cause, with myself This I now ask as an obligation to me; but when he has pleaded in your cause, you will esteem it as a favour done to you; for I will be answerable, that he shall acquit himself in a manner equal to your wishes, as well as to my hopes, and the importance of the trial. He is a youth of a most excellent disposition; and when once I shall have produced his merit to public observation, we shall soon see him exert the same generous office in bringing forward the talents of others; as, indeed, no man, without the support and encouragement of friends, and having proper opportunities thrown in his way, is able to rise at once from obscurity by the force of his own unassisted genius.

LETTER XXIV.

TO MACER.

HOW much does the fame of human actions depend upon the station of those who perform them! The very same conduct shall be either greatly magnified, or entirely overlooked, as it happens to proceed from a person of conspicuous or obscure rank. I was sailing lately upon our lake,* with an old man of my acquaintance, who desired me to observe a villa situated upon its banks, which had a chamber hanging over the water. "From that room," said he, "a woman of our city threw herself and her husband." Upon enquiring into the cause, he informed me, that her husband having been long afflicted with an ulcer in those parts which modesty conceals, she prevailed with him at last to let her inspect the sore, assuring him, at the same time, that she would most sincerely give him her opinion, whether there was a possibility of its being cured. Accordingly, upon viewing the ulcer, she found there were no hopes, and, therefore, advised him to put an end to his life; to which she not only encouraged him by her example, but was actually the means of his death; for, tying herself to her husband, she plunged with him into the lake. Though this happened in the very city where I was born, I never heard it mentioned before; and yet that this action is less taken notice of than that famous one of Arria's,† is not because it was less remarkable,

* The lake Larius.

† See an account of her, Book III. Letter 16.

but because the person who performed it was of inferior rank. Farewell.

LETTER XXV.

TO HISPANUS.

YOU inform me, that Robustus, a Roman knight of great distinction, accompanied my friend Attilius Scaurus as far as Ocriculum,* but has never been heard of since. In compliance, therefore, with your desire, I shall send for Scaurus, in order to see if he can give us any light in tracing him; though I fear, indeed, it will be to no purpose. I suspect an accident of the same unaccountable kind has attended Robustus, as formerly happened to my townsman, Metilius Crispus. I procured a *company* for him in the army, and gave him, when he set out, 40,000 sesterces† for his equipage; but I never received any letter from him afterwards, or could learn what became of him. Whether he was murdered by his servants, or together with them, is uncertain; however, neither he nor they ever appeared more. I wish we may not find it thus with respect to Robustus; nevertheless, I will send for Scaurus. I cannot refuse this office either to your generous request, or the very laudable entreaties of that most excellent youth his son, who discovers as much good sense in the method, as he does filial affection in the zeal of his enquiry; and may we

* Now Otricoli, in Ombria, or the duchy of Spoleto.

† About L. 320. Some editions read it, 400,000 sesterces, which is about L. 3200 of our money.

have the same success in finding his father, as he has had in discovering the person that accompanied him! Farewell.

LETTER XXVI.

TO SERVIANUS.

I AM extremely rejoiced to hear that you design your daughter for Fuscus Salinator, and congratulate you upon it. His family is patrician,* and both his father and mother are persons of the most exalted merit. As for himself, he is studious, learned, and eloquent, and with all the innocence of a child, unites the sprightliness of youth to the wisdom of age. I am not, believe me, deceived by my affection, when I give him this character; for though I love him beyond measure, (as his kind offices and regard to me well deserve,) yet partiality has no share in my judgment; on the contrary, the stronger my affection for him is, the more rigorously I weigh his merit. I will venture, then, to assure you, (and I speak it upon my own experience,) you could not have wished for a more accomplished son-in-law. May he soon present you with a grandson, who shall be the exact copy of his father! and with what pleasure shall I receive from the arms of two such friends, their children or grand-children, whom I shall claim a sort of right to embrace as my *own*! Farewell.

* Those families were styled patrician, whose ancestors had been members of the senate, in the earliest times of the regal or consular government.

LETTER XXVII.

TO SEVERUS.

YOU desire me to consider what turn you should give to your speech in honour of the emperor, upon your being appointed consul elect.* It is much easier, amidst that variety of topics which the virtues of this illustrious prince† abundantly supply, to find materials for encomium, than to select them. However, I will send you my opinion, or (what I rather choose) I will give them to you in person, after having laid before you the difficulties which occur to me. I am doubtful, then, whether I should advise you to pursue the method which I observed myself on the same occasion. When I was consul elect, I avoided running into the usual strain of compliment, which how far soever (as far certainly it would have been) from adulation, might yet bear the semblance of it. Not that I affected an uncommon spirit of freedom, but as well knowing the sentiments of our amiable prince, and being thoroughly persuaded, that the highest eulogy I could offer to him, would be to show the world I was under no necessity of paying him any. When I reflected what unbounded praises had been heaped upon the very worst of his predecessors, nothing, I was persuaded,

* The consuls, though they were chosen in August, did not enter upon their office till the first of January, during which interval they were styled *consules designati*, consuls elect. It was usual for them upon that occasion to compliment the emperor, by whose appointment, after the dissolution of the republican government, they were chosen.

† Trajan.

could more distinguish a prince of his real virtues, from those infamous emperors, than to address him in a different manner. And this I thought proper to observe in my speech, lest it might be suspected I passed over his glorious acts, not out of judgment, but inattention. Such was the method I then observed; but I am sensible, that the same measures are neither agreeable, nor, indeed, expedient to every man alike. Besides, the propriety of a certain mode of acting depends not only upon persons, but time and circumstances; and as the late enterprise of our illustrious prince affords materials for panegyric, no less just than recent and glorious, I doubt (as I said before) whether I should persuade you, in the present instance, to adopt the same plan as I did myself. In this, however, I am clear, that it is proper to offer it to your consideration. Farewell.

LETTER XXVIII.

TO QUADRATUS.

I WAS not ignorant of the reason which prevented your coming into Campania to receive me. But, absent as you were, might I have judged by the vast quantity of provisions of all sorts, with which I was supplied by your orders, I should have imagined you had conveyed yourself hither with your whole magazine of good fare. I must own I was so arrant a clown, as to take all that was offered me; however, it was in compliance with the solicitations of your people, and fearing you would chide both them and me, if I refused. But, for the future, if

you will not observe some measure, *I* must. And accordingly I assured your servants, if ever they brought me such profusion again, I would absolutely return the whole. You will tell me, I know, that I should consider every thing belonging to you as mine. I am sensible that I ought; and, therefore, I would use them with the same moderation as my own. Farewell.

LETTER XXIX.

TO QUADRATUS.

AVIDIUS QUIETUS, whose affection, and (which I equally valued) whose approbation I had the happiness to enjoy, used frequently to cite this maxim, among many others of his friend Thrasea's: *That* there are three sorts of causes which it becomes a man of honour to undertake; those of our friends, those of persons who are destitute of any other advocate to plead their claim, and those which relate to public example. Why we should engage in the cause of our friends, requires no explanation; but to defend the destitute, shows both a firm and humane heart; as to rise in causes of the exemplary kind, is a proof of being actuated by a principle of patriotism; nothing being of more consequence to society, than whether a good or an evil precedent prevails. To these causes I will add (perhaps in the spirit of ambition, however I will venture to add) *those* also of a public nature, which are rendered conspicuous by the splendid rank of the person arraigned; for it is reasonable, no doubt, that the honour which is derived to the orator's own reputation,

by appearing as an advocate in impeachments of that kind, should sometimes enter into his motives for vindicating the conduct of an illustrious client. These are the limits (since you require my sentiments) which I would prescribe to a young man of your respectable station and modest virtues.

For the rest, practice, I know, is generally deemed, and in fact is, the best master in the art of pleading; and I have seen many, who, with moderate parts, and no literature, have, by that single advantage, made a good figure. Nevertheless, the observation of Pollio (or, at least, what I have been told was his) is certainly true, as I know by experience: "By being an able advocate," said he, "I obtained much practice; as, on the other hand, much practice rendered me a less able advocate." The reason is, that a talent for oratory, by being too repeatedly exercised, sinks into a mere mechanical habit; and the frequent pleader, instead of a just confidence, is apt to fall into a careless reliance upon the strength of his powers. Nor is the being accustomed to public speaking, a circumstance absolutely necessary, in order to acquire a reputation of eloquence; the great modesty of Isocrates, which, together with the weakness of his voice, prevented him from appearing at the bar, did not obstruct his attaining the character of a consummate orator.

Let me farther recommend it to you, to read and compose, and meditate much, that you may always possess a fund of suitable matter, when you choose to appear as an advocate in the courts of justice; and it never will be your choice, I am well persuaded, but when it becomes you to act in that

character; a restriction which I have always laid down to myself. I must confess, however, that I have been concerned in some causes, not so much from choice as necessity; but to comply with necessity, is in some degree, to comply with reason. The fact is, I have occasionally been appointed counsel by the senate; however, it was in causes which fell within Thrasea's third rule, that is, of the exemplary kind. I was advocate for the province of Bœtica, against Bæbius Massa; where the question being, whether the impeachment should be received? it passed in the affirmative. I appeared for them a second time against Cæcilius Classicus; and the point in debate was, whether the provincial officers, who acted under him in his proconsulship, should be deemed accomplices? It was determined they should; and they were punished accordingly. I was counsel against Marius Priscus, who having been convicted of bribery, endeavoured to take advantage of the lenity of the law in that case, the penalty of which was by no means adequate to his enormous guilt; but he was sentenced to banishment. I defended Julius Bassus in an affair in which he had acted imprudently, 'tis true, but not in the least with any ill intention; the matter was referred to the ordinary judges, and he was permitted, in the mean while, to retain his seat in the senate. I pleaded, likewise, not long since, on behalf of Varenus, who petitioned for leave to produce witnesses also on his part; which was granted him. And now I will only wish, that I may, for the future, be enjoined to plead such causes by authority, in which it would become me to appear by choice. Farewell.

LETTER XXX.

TO FABATUS.

WE have the highest reason, most certainly, to celebrate your birth-day as our own, since the felicity of ours is derived from you, to whose kind attentions it is owing that we are gay here, and at our ease in Rome.* Your Camilian villa in Campania† has suffered by the injuries of time, and is falling into decay; however, the most valuable parts of the building either remain entire, or are but slightly damaged, and I wait here to see it put into thorough repair. Though I flatter myself I have many friends, yet scarce any, I doubt, of the sort you enquire after, and which the affair you mention demands. All mine lie among those whose employments engage them in town; whereas the conduct of country business requires a person of a robust constitution, and inured to labour, who will not look upon the office as mean, and can submit to a solitary life. The opinion you have of Rufus is suitable to a person who was distinguished by the friendship of your son; but of what service he can be to us, upon the present occasion, I know not; though I am well persuaded he will rejoice to have it in his power to render us any. Farewell.

* There is great obscurity in the beginning of this letter, which none of the commentators have been able sufficiently to enlighten. The difficulty arises from its evidently referring to certain articles in a letter, which Fabatus, the grandfather of Calphurnia, Pliny's wife, had written to him, the purport of which can only be guessed.

† So called, because it formerly belonged to Camillus.

LETTER XXXI.

TO CORNELIANUS.

I RECEIVED lately the most exquisite satisfaction at Centemcellæ,* (as it is now called,) being summoned thither by Cæsar† to attend a *council*. Could any thing, indeed, afford a higher gratification, than to behold the emperor exhibiting not only his affability, but his justice and his wisdom, even in retirement, where those virtues are most observable? Various were the matters brought in question before him, and which proved, in so many different instances, the eminent abilities of the judge. The affair of Claudius Ariston came on first. He is an Ephesian nobleman, of great munificence and unambitious popularity; whose virtues have rendered him obnoxious to a set of people of far different characters; they had instigated an informer against him, of the same infamous stamp with themselves; but he was honourably acquitted. The next day the charge against Gallita, accused of adultery, was heard. Her husband, who is a military tribune, was upon the point of offering himself as a candidate for certain honours at Rome; but she had disgraced both him and herself by an intrigue with a centurian.‡ The husband informed the consul's lieutenant, who wrote to the emperor concern-

* Supposed to be *Civita Vecchia*. † Trajan.

‡ An officer in the Roman legions, somewhat resembling a captain in our companies.

ing it. Cæsar, having examined the proofs, broke the centurian, and sentenced him to banishment. It remained that some punishment should be inflicted, likewise, upon the other party, as it is a crime of which both must necessarily be equally guilty. But the husband's affection for his wife inclined him to drop that part of the prosecution, not without some suspicion of connivance; for he continued to live with her even after he had commenced his prosecution, contenting himself, it should seem, with having removed his rival. But he was ordered to proceed in the suit; and, though he complied with great reluctance, it was necessary, nevertheless, that she should be condemned. Accordingly, she was sentenced to the punishment ordained by the Julian law.* The emperor thought proper to specify, in his decree, the name and office of the centurian, that it might appear he passed it in virtue of military discipline; lest it should be imagined, he claimed a particular cognizance in every cause of the same nature. The third day was employed in examining an affair which had occasioned much and various speculation, relating to the will of Julius Tiro, part of which was plainly genuine, the other part, it was alleged, was forged. The persons accused of this fraud were Sempronius Senecio, a Roman knight, and Eurythmus, Cæsar's freedman and procurator.† The heirs jointly petitioned the

* This law was made by Augustus Cæsar; but it no where clearly appears what was the peculiar punishment it inflicted.

† An officer employed by the emperor to receive and regulate the public revenue in the provinces.

emperor, when he was in Dacia,* that he would reserve to himself the trial of this cause; to which he consented. At his return from that expedition, he appointed a day for the hearing; and when some of the heirs, as in respect to Eurythmus, offered to withdraw the suit, the emperor nobly replied, "He is not Polycletus,† nor am I Nero." However, he indulged the petitioners with an adjournment, and the time being expired, he now sat to hear the cause. Two of the heirs appeared, and desired that either their whole number might be compelled to plead, as they had all joined in the information, or that they also might have leave to desist. Cæsar delivered his opinion with great dignity and temper; and when the counsel, on the part of Senecio and Eurythmus, said, that unless they were heard in defence of their clients, the latter would remain under the suspicion of guilt: "I am not concerned," replied the emperor, "what suspicions *they* may lie under, 'tis *I* that am suspected;" and then turning to us who were of the council, "Advise me," said he, "how to act in this matter, for you see they complain, that I do not give them leave to withdraw their suit." At length, by the advice of the council, he ordered notice to be given to the heirs, that they should either go on with the cause, or each of them justify their reasons for withdrawing the charge; otherwise, that he would pass sentence upon them as calumniators.‡

* Comprehending Transylvania, Moldavia, and Walachia.

† Polycletus was a freedman, and great favourite of Nero.

‡ Memmius, or Rhemmius, (the critics are not agreed which,) was author of a law, by which it was enacted, That whosoever was

Thus you see in what honourable and important occupations we employed our time at Centumcellæ; which, however, was diversified with amusements of the most agreeable kind. We were every day invited to Cæsar's table, which, for so great a prince, was spread with much plainness and simplicity. There we were entertained either with interludes, or passed the night in the most pleasing conversation. When we took our leave of the emperor, he sent each of us presents; so studious is he, upon all occasions, to indulge the benevolence of his heart! As for myself, I was not only charmed with the dignity and wisdom of the judge, the honour done to his council, the ease and unreserved freedom of the conversation, but also with the agreeable situation of the place. This delightful villa is surrounded by the most verdant meadows, and commands a fine view of the sea, which flows into a spacious harbour in the form of an amphitheatre. The left-hand of this port is defended by exceeding strong works, and they are now actually employed in carrying on the same on the opposite side. An artificial island, which is rising in the mouth of the haven, will break the force of the waves, and afford a safe channel to ships on each side. In the construction of this wonderful instance of art, stones of a most enormous size are transported hither in a large sort of pontoons, and being piled one upon the other, are fixed by their own weight, and gradually accumulat-

convicted of calumny and false accusation, should be stigmatized with a mark in his forehead; and, by the law of the twelve tables, false accusers were to suffer the same punishment as would have been inflicted upon the person unjustly accused, if the crime had been proved.

ing in the manner of a natural mound. It already lifts its rocky back above the ocean, while the waves which beat upon it, being tossed to an immense height, foam with a prodigious noise, and whiten all the sea around. To these stones are added large blocks, which, when the whole shall be completed, will give it the appearance of an island just emerged from the ocean! This haven is to be called by the name of its great founder,* and will prove of infinite benefit, by affording a very secure retreat to ships on that extensive and dangerous coast. Farewell.

LETTER XXXII.

TO QUINCTILIAN.

THOUGH your desires, I know, are extremely moderate, and the education which your daughter† has received, is suitable to your fortune, and

* Trajan.

† This letter has been generally supposed to be addressed to the famous Quinctilian, author of that excellent treatise upon oratory, which is still extant. But there are very strong reasons to believe, that either there is some error in the title, or that it is addressed to another person of the same name. Quinctilian, in the opening of his sixth book, *De Inst. Orat.* takes occasion to mention his family, where he is lamenting to his friend Victorius the loss of his eldest son, which had just then happened. He takes notice, at the same time, of the deaths of his wife and younger son; and, after some very pathetic reflections, closes the whole with this observation:—"*Non miseri, sicut facultates patrimonii nostri, ita hoc opus* aliis *paramus*, aliis *relinquemus.*" This preface may be considered, then, as the register of his family. But he does not give the least hint of a daughter, which seems difficult to be accounted for upon any other reason, than that he never had one. For, if she was dead, it is highly natural to imagine, he

that of Tutilius her grandfather; yet, as she is going to be married to a person of such distinction as Nonius Celer, whose station requires a certain splendid mode of living, it will be necessary to consider the rank of her husband in her clothes and equipage; circumstances, which though they do not augment real dignity, yet certainly adorn and grace it. But as I am sensible your revenue is not equal to the greatness of your mind, I claim to myself a part of your expence, and, like another father, present the young lady with fifty thousand sesterces.* The sum should be larger, but that I am well persuaded the smallness of the present is the only consideration that can prevail with your modesty not to refuse it. Farewell.

LETTER XXXIII.

TO ROMANUS.

THROW, throw your tasks aside! the sovereign said.† Thus, whether you are engaged in reading or writing, away with your books and papers, and take up my divine oration, as those Cyclops did the arms of Æneas. Now, tell me, could I introduce my speech to you with an air of more importance? But, in

would have deplored the loss of her among that of the rest of his children. If she was living, how could he lament the necessity of leaving his patrimony to *strangers?* or if she was unworthy of his tenderness, why does he not complain of that unhappiness among his other misfortunes?—Vid. *Traduct. de Quinct. par l'Abbé Gedoyn*, in the Preface.

* About L. 400 of our money.

† Æn. 8. Pitt's Trans. The speech of Vulcan to his Cyclops, when he directs them to prepare arms for Æneas.

good earnest, I put it into your hands as the best of *my* performances;* for it is myself only that I pretend to emulate. It was spoken in defence of Accia Variola; and the dignity of the person interested together with the singularity of the occasion, and the majesty of the tribunal, conspired to render it extremely remarkable. Figure to yourself a lady, ennobled not only by her birth, but her marriage to a person of prætorian rank, disinherited by her father, and suing for her patrimony in the centumviral court, within eleven days after this old man, seized with a fit of love at fourscore years of age, had introduced a mother-in-law to his daughter. Imagine the solemnity of a court of justice, composed of one hundred and eighty judges, (for that is the number of which it consisted;) friends innumerable attending on both parties; the benches infinitely thronged, and a wide circle of people encompassing the judges, at the same time that numbers pressed round the tribunal; even the very galleries lined with men and women, hanging over with the greatest earnestness, (who, though they might see tolerably well, it was scarce possible for them to hear a word;) represent to yourself, in short, fathers, daughters, and mothers-in-law, all warmly interesting themselves in the event of this important trial. The opinions of the judges were divided, two of the courts being for us, and two against us. It is somewhat remarkable, that the same question, debated before the same judges, and pleaded by the same advocates, and at the same time, should

* Sidonius Apollinaris says, that Pliny acquired more honour by this speech, even than by his incomparable panegyric upon Trajan.

happen to receive so different a decision, that one would almost imagine it was more than accid[illegible]. However, in the final event, the mother-in-law, who claimed under the will a sixth-part of the inheritance, lost her cause. Suberinus† was also excluded his pretensions; who, though he had been disinherited by his father, and had not dared to vindicate his own patrimony, had yet the singular assurance to claim the effects of his father-in-law.

I have been thus particular in giving you a detail of the circumstances which attended this cause, not only that my letter might inform you of what you could not learn by my speech; but also (for I will honestly confess the artifice) in order to your reading it with more pleasure, by being thus introduced, as it were, into the audience. Complicated as this pleading is, I do not despair of its recommending itself to you, as much as if it had the grace of brevity. The abundance of matter; the just order in which it is arranged; the little narratives that are interspersed throughout; together with the several kinds of style which diversify the composition; will always give it an air of novelty. I will even venture to say to you (what I durst not to any one else) that a spirit of animated and sublime eloquence breaks out in many parts of it; as in others it as-

* It should seem, by this passage, that the centumviral court (consisting of 140 judges) was divided into four classes, each class sitting in their juridical capacity, upon the bench at the same time; and that, when the question concerned the validity of a testamentary devise, if these classes were equally divided in opinion, the claimant, under the will, lost the legacy.

† This Suberinus (the commentators suppose) was son to the woman whom Accia's father had married in his old age.

sumes the close and argumentative manner. I was frequently obliged to intermix dry computations with the elevated and pathetic, and to descend from the orator almost to the accountant; so that you will sometimes imagine the scene was changed from the solemnity of the centumviral tribunal, to the familiarity of a private consultation. I gave a loose to my indignation, my resentment, and my compassion; and, in steering through this illustrious cause, was governed by turns with every varying gust of the passions. In a word, my particular friends look upon this speech (and I will venture to repeat it again) as my best performance, esteeming it the *Ctesiphon** of my orations; whether with reason or not you will easily judge, who have them all so perfectly in your memory, as to be able, while you are reading it, to make the comparison, without the trouble of turning to my former speeches. Farewell.

LETTER XXXIV.

TO MAXIMUS.

You were perfectly in the right to promise a combat of gladiators to our good friends the citizens of Verona;† not only as they have long distinguished you with their peculiar esteem and veneration, but as it was from that city you received the amiable object of your most tender affection, your late

* An oration of Demosthenes in defence of Ctesiphon, esteemed the best of that noble orator's speeches.

† In the territories of the republic of Venice.

excellent wife. And since you owed some honourable memorial, or public representation, to her memory, what other spectacle could you have exhibited more proper to the occasion?* Besides, you were so unanimously requested by the corporation, that to have refused, would have had the appearance rather of obstinacy than firmness. The readiness with which you granted their petition, and the magnificent† manner in which you executed the object of it, is much to your honour; for a greatness of soul is seen in these smaller instances, as well as in matters of higher moment. I am sorry the African panthers, which you had largely provided for this purpose, did not arrive time enough; but, though they were delayed by the tempestuous season, the obligation to you is equally the same, since it was not your fault that they were not exhibited. Farewell.

* It was an opinion which unhappily prevailed in the ancient pagan world, that the ghosts of the deceased were rendered propitious by human blood. This absurd and cruel notion gave rise to these barbarous gladiatorial combats, which, at first, were only exhibited at funeral obsequies, and none but criminals were appointed to those mortal encounters. But, in process of time, they became part of the public entertainments, and persons were trained up to the sole purpose of these inhuman shows.

† The amphitheatre, in which these shows were exhibited, is still to be seen in Verona; the inside whereof is the most entire of any ancient structure for the same purpose now existing. It is computed to have been sufficiently spacious to contain upwards of 23,000 spectators, to sit commodiously.—Vid. *Wright's Travels.*

END OF VOLUME FIRST.

THE

LETTERS

OF

PLINY THE CONSUL.

WITH OCCASIONAL REMARKS.

BY WILLIAM MELMOTH, ESQ.

VOL. II.

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THE LETTERS OF PLINY.

BOOK SEVENTH.

LETTER I.

TO RESTITUTUS.

THIS obstinate distemper which hangs upon you greatly alarms me; and though I know how extremely temperate you are, yet I am afraid your disease should get the better of your moderation. Let me entreat you, then, to resist it with a determined abstemiousness; a remedy, be assured, of all others the most laudable, as well as the most salutary. There is nothing impracticable in what I recommend; it is a rule, at least, which I always enjoin my family to observe with respect to myself. I tell them, should I be attacked with any disorder, I hope that I shall desire nothing of which I ought either to be ashamed, or have reason to repent: However, if my distemper should prevail over my judgment, I forbid them to give me any thing but by the consent of my physicians; and I assure the people about me, that I shall resent their compliance with me in things improper, as much as another man would their refusal. I had once a most violent fever: when the fit was a little abated, and

I had been anointed,* my physician offered me something to drink; I desired he would first feel my pulse, and, upon his seeming to think the paroxysm was not quite abated, I instantly returned the cup, though it was just at my lips. Afterwards, when I was preparing to go into the bath, twenty days from the first attack of my illness, perceiving the physicians whispering together, I enquired what they were saying? They replied, they were of opinion I might possibly bathe with safety; nevertheless, that they were not without some suspicion of hazard. What occasion then is there, said I, of bathing at all? And thus, with great complacency, I gave up a pleasure I was upon the point of enjoying, and abstained from the bath with the same satisfaction I was preparing to enter it. I mention this, not only in order to enforce my advice by example, but also that this letter may be a sort of tie upon me, to observe the same resolute abstinence for the future. Farewell.

LETTER II.

TO JUSTUS.

ARE you not inconsistent, when you assure me you have no intermission from business, and yet

* Unction was much esteemed, as a remedy in certain cases, by the ancient physicians. Celsus, who flourished, it is supposed, about Pliny's time, expressly recommends it in the remission of acute distempers: "*Ungi leniterque pertractari corpus, etiam in acutis et recentibus morbis oportet; in remissione tamen,*" &c.—CELSI Med. ed. Almeloveen, p. 88.

express, at the same time, an earnest desire to see my works, upon which even the idle will scarce bestow some of their useless hours? I will not, then, break in upon your occupations during this summer season; but when the return of winter shall make it probable, that your evenings, at least, may be disengaged, I will look over my trifles for something to amuse your vacant hours. In the mean while, I shall be well satisfied if my letters should not prove troublesome, as I suspect they are, and therefore shorten them. Farewell.

LETTER III.

TO PRÆSENS.

ARE you determined, then, to pass your whole time between Lucania* and Campania?† Your answer, I suppose, will be, that the former is your native country, and the latter that of your wife. This, I admit, may justify a long absence; but I cannot allow it as a reason for a perpetual one. But are you resolved, in good earnest, never to return to Rome; that theatre of honours, preferment, and amicable connections of every sort? Are you obstinately determined to live your own master, to sleep as long as you please, and to rise when you think proper? Will you never change your country garb for the dress of the town, but spend your whole days unembarrassed by our crowded streets? It is

* Comprehending the Basilicata, a province in the kingdom of Naples.

† Now called Campagna di Roma.—See Book VI. Let. 4. note.

time, however, you should revisit this our scene of hurry, were it only that your rural pleasures may not grow languid by uninterrupted possession: appear at the levees of the great, that you may enjoy the same honour yourself with more satisfaction; and mix in our crowds, that you may have a keener relish for the charms of solitude. But am I not imprudently retarding the friend I would recal? It is these very circumstances, perhaps, that induce you every day more and more to wrap yourself up in retirement. All, however, I wish to prevail with you, is only to intermit, not to renounce, the charms of solitude. If I were to invite you to a feast, as I would blend dishes of a poignant taste with those of the luscious kind, in order to sharpen the edge of your palate by the one, which had been flattened by the other; so I now advise you to enliven, sometimes, the smooth pleasures of life, with those of a more active nature. Farewell.

LETTER IV.

TO PONTIUS.

YOU have read, it seems, my poems, and are desirous to know how it happened that a man of my gravity (as you are pleased to call me, though, in truth, I am only not a trifler,) could adopt this mode of composition. To take the account, then, a good way back, I must acquaint you, that I had always an inclination to poetry, insomuch that, when I was fourteen years of age, I composed a tragedy in Greek. If you should ask me what sort of one? I

protest I do not know; all that I remember of it is, that it was called a tragedy. Some time afterwards, in my return from the army, being detained in the island of Icaria* by contrary winds, I vented my spleen against that place in some Latin elegies. I have since made some attempts in the heroic kind; but these *hendecasyllables*† are the first I ever composed in that measure, and the following accident gave birth to them. The treatise of Asinius Gallus was read to me one day at Laurentinum, wherein he draws a comparison between his father and Cicero, and cites an epigram of Tully's on his favourite Tiro. Upon retiring to take my afternoon's nap (for it was summer,) and not being able to sleep, I began to reflect, that the greatest orators have been fond of poetry, and valued themselves upon it. I tried, therefore, what could do in this way; and, though I had long disused myself to compositions of this nature, I struck out, in a much shorter time than I could have imagined, the following lines upon the subject which gave me the first hint:

When Gallus I read, who pretends that his sire
Had far more than Tully poetical fire;
The wisest of men, I perceived, held it fit
To temper his wisdom with love and with wit;
For Tully, grave Tully, in amorous strains,
Of the frauds of his paramour Tiro complains;
That, faithless to love, and to pleasure untrue,
From his promised embrace the arch wanton withdrew.
Then I said to my heart,—why shouldst thou conceal
The sweetest of passions, the love which you feel?—
Yes, fly, wanton Muse, and proclaim it around,
Thy Pliny has loved, and his Tiro has found;

* An island in the Archipelago, now called Nicaria.

† See Book IV. Let. 14. note.

The coy one so artful, who sweetly denies,
And from the soft flame, but to heighten it, flies.

From this I turned to elegy, which flowed from me with the same ease; and being thus drawn in by the facility with which the muses yielded to my addresses, I proceeded to increase the number of my productions of this kind. At my return to Rome, I showed my performances to some of my friends, who were pleased to approve of them. Afterwards, whenever I had leisure, and particularly when I travelled, I made several other attempts in the poetical way. At length I determined, after the example of many others, to publish a separate volume of these poems; and I have no reason to repent of my resolution. They are much enquired after, and are in every body's hands; they have even tempted the Greeks to learn our language, who sing them to their harps and lyres. But will you not imagine I begin to rave? Remember, however, poets have that privilege. The truth is, I am not giving you my own judgment, but that of others, which, be it right or wrong, I am much pleased with; and have only to wish, that posterity may be of the same opinion. Farewell.

LETTER V.

TO CALPHURNIA.*

IT is incredible how impatiently I wish for your return;—such is the tenderness of my affec-

* His wife.

tion for you, and so unaccustomed am I to a separation! I lie awake the greatest part of the night in thinking of you, and (to use a very common, but very true expression) my feet carry me, of their own accord, to your apartment, at those hours I used to visit you; but not finding you there, I return with as much sorrow and disappointment as an excluded lover. The only intermission my anxiety knows, is when I am engaged at the bar, and in the causes of my friends. Judge, then, how wretched must *his* life be, who finds no repose but in business; no consolation but in a crowd. Farewell.

LETTER VI.

TO MACRINUS.

A VERY singular and remarkable circumstance has happened in the affair of Varenus,* the consequence of which is yet in suspense. The Bithynians, it is said, (for I only mention it as a report,) have dropped their prosecution of him, being, it seems, convinced, at last, that the accusation was extremely ill-founded. A deputy from that province is arrived, who has brought with him a decree of their assembly; copies of which he has delivered to Cæsar, and to several of the principal persons in Rome, as also to us, the advocates for Varenus. Magius,† nevertheless, whom I mentioned in my last letter, persists in his charge; to support which,

* See Book V. Let. 20.

† One of the Bithynians employed to manage the trial.

he is incessantly teazing the worthy Nigrinus. This excellent person was counsel for him in his former petition to the consuls, that Varenus might be compelled to produce his accounts. Upon that occasion, as I attended Varenus merely as a friend, I determined to be silent. I thought it highly imprudent for me, who was appointed his counsel by the senate, to attempt to defend him as a person accused, when it was his business to insist that there was actually no charge subsisting against him. Accordingly, when Nigrinus had finished his speech, the consuls turning their eyes upon me, I rose up, and said, "When they should hear what the real deputies from the province had to object against the motion of Nigrinus, they would be sensible that my silence was not without sufficient reason." Upon this Nigrinus asked me to whom these deputies were sent? I replied, "That the decree of the province was directed to me, among others." He returned, "That is a point, though it may be clear to you, I am not so well satisfied of." To this I rejoined, "Though it may not be so evident to you, who are concerned to support the accusation, it may be perfectly clear to me, who am on the more favourable side." Then Polyænus, the deputy from the province, acquainted the senate with the reasons for superseding the prosecution, but desired it might be without prejudice to Cæsar's determination. Magius answered him; Polyænus replied; as for myself, I only now and then threw in a word, observing in general a profound silence. For I have learned, by experience, that, upon some occasions, there is as much rhetoric in silence, as in all the

pomp of the most studied eloquence ; and I remember, in some criminal cases, to have done even more service to my clients by a judicious taciturnity, than I could have expected from the most artful speech. To enter into the subject of eloquence, is indeed very foreign to the intent of my present letter, yet allow me to give you one instance in proof of the observation I just mentioned. A certain lady having lost her son, suspected that his freedmen, whom he had appointed co-heirs with her, were guilty of forging the will, and poisoning him. Accordingly, she charged them with the fact before the emperor, who directed Julianus Servianus to try the cause. I was counsel for the defendants, and the case being exceedingly remarkable, and the advocates concerned on both sides of high reputation, it drew together a very numerous audience. The event was, the servants being put to the torture, my clients were acquitted. But the mother applied a second time to the emperor, pretending she had discovered some new evidence. Servianus was therefore directed to rehear the cause, that she might produce her fresh proofs. Julius Africanus was counsel for the mother, a young man of good parts, but little experience. He is grandson to the famous orator of that name, of whom it is reported, that Passienus Crispus, hearing him one day plead, archly said, " All this, I own, is very fine ; but what is it to the purpose ?" Julius Africanus, I say, having made a long harangue, and exhausted the portion of time allotted to him, entreated Servianus to allow him to add one word more. When he had concluded, and the eyes of the whole assembly had been fixed a

considerable time upon me, "I would have answered Africanus," I said, "if he had given us that *one word* he begged leave to add, in which I doubt not he would have told us something we had not heard before." I do not remember to have gained so much applause by any speech I ever made, as I did in this instance by making none. Thus the little that I said for Varenus was received with the same general approbation. The consuls, agreeably to the request of Polyænus, reserved the whole affair for the determination of the emperor; whose resolution I impatiently wait for, as that will decide, whether I may be entirely at my ease with respect to Varenus, or must again renew all my trouble and solicitude upon his account. Farewell.

LETTER VII.

TO SATURNINUS.

THOUGH I had very lately made my acknowledgments to our friend Priscus, yet, since it was your desire, I willingly repeated them. It is with great pleasure I see so much harmony subsist between two such worthy men, whom I tenderly esteem, and that you consider each other's amity as a mutual obligation. For he professes also on his part to receive much happiness from yours, and, with a very generous contention, endeavours to rival you in that reciprocal affection which time, I am persuaded, will augment.

I regret that any business should call you off from your studies; however, as soon as you shall have

compromised (which you say you are upon the point of effecting) one of the causes you mention, and brought the other to a hearing, you will be at leisure to enjoy the retirement of the country; and, when you are satiated with repose, we may hope to see you in Rome. Farewell.

LETTER VIII.

TO PRISCUS.

THE frequent letters which I receive from Saturninus, expressing his sense of your favours to him, afford me inexpressible satisfaction. May you go on as you began, and continue to cherish an affection for so worthy a man, from whose friendship you will receive a most sensible and lasting gratification. For as he is greatly distinguished by every other virtue, so particularly, by his invariable attachment to his friends. Farewell.

LETTER IX.

TO TUSCUS.

YOU desire my sentiments concerning the method of study you should pursue, in that retirement to which you have long since withdrawn. In the first place, then, I look upon it as a very advantageous practice (and it is what many recommend) to translate either from Greek into Latin, or from Latin into Greek. By this means you will furnish yourself not only with proper but brilliant expres-

sions, with a variety of beautiful figures; and, in short, acquire a nervous and powerful style. Besides, by imitating the most approved authors, you will find your imagination insensibly catch their flame, and kindle into a similar warmth of invention; at the same time, that those passages which you may possibly have overlooked in a common way of reading, cannot escape you in translating; and this method will also enlarge your knowledge, and improve your judgment. After you have read an eminent author, it may be proper, in order to make yourself more perfectly master of his subject and argument, to turn, from being his reader, to be his rival, as it were, and attempt something of your own upon the same topic; and then make an impartial comparison between your performance and his, in order to observe in what points either you or he have most happily succeeded. It will be a matter of very pleasing congratulation to yourself, if you should find, in some articles, that you have the advantage of him, as it will be a great mortification if he should rise above you in all. You may sometimes venture, in these little experimental essays, to try your strength upon the most shining passages of a distinguished author. The attempt, indeed, will be somewhat bold; but as it is a contention which passes in secret, it cannot be taxed with presumption. Not but that we have seen instances of persons, who have publicly entered this sort of lists with great success; and while they did not despair of overtaking, have gloriously advanced before those whom they would have thought it sufficient honour to follow. After you have thus finish-

ed a composition, you may lay it aside, till it is no longer fresh in your memory, and then take it up, in order to revise and correct it. You will find several things to retain, but still more to reject; you will add a new thought here, and alter another there. It is a laborious and tedious task, I own, thus to re-enflame the mind after its first ardour has subsided; to recover an impulse when its force has been checked and spent: in a word, to interweave new parts into the texture of a composition, without disturbing or confounding the original plan; but the advantage attending this method will overbalance the difficulty. I know your present attention is principally directed towards the eloquence of the bar; but I would not for that reason advise you never to quit the polemic, if I may so call it, and contentious style. As land is improved by sowing it with various seeds, so is the mind by exercising it with different studies. I would recommend it to you, therefore, sometimes to single out a fine passage of history; and sometimes to exercise yourself in the epistolary style. For it frequently happens, that, in pleading, one has occasion to introduce historical, and even poetical descriptions; as by studying the epistolary manner of writing, you will acquire a concise and easy expression. It will be extremely advantageous also to unbend your mind by poetical compositions: when I say so, I do not mean that species of poetry which turns upon subjects of great length, (*such* being suitable only for persons of much leisure,) but those little pieces of the sprightly kind of poesy, which serve as proper reliefs to, and are

consistent with employments of every sort. They commonly go under the title of *poetical amusements*; but these amusements have sometimes gained as much reputation to their authors, as works of a more serious nature; and thus (for while I am exhorting you to poetry, why should I not turn poet myself?)

> As yielding wax the artist's skill commands,
> Submissive shaped beneath his forming hands;
> Now dreadful stands in arms a Mars confest;
> Or now with Venus' softer air imprest;
> A wanton Cupid now the mould belies;
> Now shines, severely chaste, a Pallas wise:
> As not alone to quench the raging flame,
> The sacred fountain pours her friendly stream;
> But sweetly gliding through the flowery green,
> Spreads glad refreshment o'er the smiling scene;
> So, formed by science, should the ductile mind
> Receive, distinct, each various art refined.

In this manner the greatest men, as well as the most eminent orators, were accustomed either to exercise or amuse themselves, or rather, indeed, both. It is surprising how much the mind is entertained and refreshed by these little poetical compositions, as they turn upon subjects of gallantry, satire, tenderness, manners, and every thing, in short, that concerns life and the affairs of the world. Besides, the same advantage attends the exercising our minds in this inferior species of poesy, as in every other sort; we turn from them to the easier composition of prose with so much the more pleasure, after having experienced the difficulty of being constrained and fettered by numbers.

And now, perhaps, I have enlarged upon the question you proposed to me more than you de-

sired; nevertheless, there is still one article which I have omitted: I have not told you what kind of authors you should read; though, indeed, that was sufficiently implied, when I mentioned the subjects I would recommend for your compositions. You will remember, that the most approved writers of each sort are to be carefully selected; for, as it has been well observed, "though we should read much, we should not read many books."* Who

* Thus the noble and polite moralist, speaking of the influence which our reading has upon our *taste* and *manners*, thinks it improper "to call a man *well-read*, who reads many authors; since he must, of necessity, have more ill models than good; and be more stuffed with bombast, ill fancy, and wry thought, than filled with solid sense and just imagination."—*Charact.* vol. i. 142. When the Goths over-ran Greece, the libraries escaped their destruction, by a notion which some of their leaders industriously propagated among them, that it would be more for their interest to leave those spoils untouched to their enemies; as being proper to enervate their minds, and amuse them with vain and idle speculations. Truth, perhaps, has been less a gainer by this multiplicity of books than error; and it may be a question, whether the excellent models which have been delivered down to us from antiquity, together with those few which modern times have produced, by any means balance the immoderate weight which must be thrown into the opposite scale of writers. The truth is, though we may be learned by other men's reflections, wise we can only be by our own; and the maxim here recommended by Pliny, would well deserve the attention of the studious, though no other inconvenience attended the reading of many books, than that which Sir William Temple apprehends from it,—the lessening the force and growth of a man's own genius. For it may be justly doubted, with that ingenious author, "whether the weight and number of so many other men's thoughts and notions may not suppress his own, or hinder the motion or agitation of them, from which all invention arises; as heaping on wood, or too many sticks, or too close together, suppresses, and sometimes quite extinguishes, a little spark, that would otherwise have grown up to a noble flame."—*Essay on Learning*, vol. i. 158. fol. edit.

those authors are, is so clearly settled, and so generally known, that I need not particularly name them; besides, I have already extended this letter to such an immoderate length, that I fear I have too long interrupted those studies, the method of which I have been pointing out to you. I will here resign you, therefore, to your tablets, either to resume the studies in which you were before engaged, or to enter upon some of those I have recommended. Farewell.

LETTER X.

TO MACRINUS.

AS I always desire to know the end of an interesting story when it broke off before the conclusion, so I imagine you will be glad to be informed of the remaining part of the cause, which I mentioned to you,* between the Bithynians and Varenus. It was pleaded before the emperor by Polyænus on one side, and Magius on the other. When Cæsar had heard both parties, "Neither party," said he, "shall have reason to complain of delay, for I will take care to inform myself of the real sentiments of the province." In the mean while, Varenus has gained a very considerable point; for can any circumstance make the justness of his accusation appear more doubtful, than that it is a question whether he is accused at all? We have only to wish, that the province may not again ap-

* See Letter VI. of this Book.

prove of the measure which, it is said, she now condemns, and repent of her former repentance. Farewell.

LETTER XI.

TO FABATUS.*

YOU are surprised, I find, that my share of five-twelfths of the estate which lately fell to me, and which I had directed to be sold to the best bidder, should have been disposed of by my freedman Hermes to Corellia, (without putting it up to auction) at the rate of seven hundred thousand sestercest for the whole. You think it might have produced nine hundred thousand,‡ and are so much the more desirous to know, whether I am inclined to ratify what he has done. I am; and for such reasons, I hope, as not only you will approve, but which will also excuse me to my joint-coheirs, for having, upon a motive of superior obligation, separated my interest from theirs. I have the highest esteem for Corellia, both as the sister of Rufus, whose memory will ever be sacred to me, and as she was an intimate friend of my mother. Besides, that excellent man Minutius Tuscus, her husband, has every claim to my affection that a long friendship can give him; as there was likewise so strict an intimacy between her son and me, that I fixed

* His wife's grandfather.

† About L. 5600 of our money.

‡ About L. 7200 of our money.

upon him to preside at the games which I exhibited when I was elected prætor. This lady, when I was last in the country, expressed a strong inclination to purchase some spot upon our lake of Comum; I therefore made her an offer, at her own price, of any quantity of my land there, except what came to me from my father and mother; for I could not consent to sell any part of my patrimonial estate, even to Corellia. When the inheritance in question fell to me, I wrote to acquaint her it was to be sold. This letter I sent by Hermes; who, upon her requesting him immediately to assign to her my proportion, consented. You see, therefore, how strongly my honour is engaged, to confirm an act which my freedman did, in pursuance of what he knew to be my inclinations. I have only to entreat my fellow-coheirs, not to be offended, that I have made a separate sale of what I had certainly a right to dispose of. They are under no necessity of being governed by my example, since they have not the same connections with Corellia; and are at full liberty, therefore, to be guided by interest, which, in my own case, I chose to sacrifice to friendship. Farewell.

LETTER XII.

TO MINUTIUS.

I HAVE delayed so much the longer sending you the petition, which I have drawn up for the use of your, or rather I should say *our*, friend, (for what is there we do not possess in common?) that you

might not have time to correct it; that is, to render all the pains I have taken ineffectual. After all, whether you may or may not find time for that purpose, I know not; but of this I am sure, you will most certainly spoil it, if, agreeably to the very *delicate* taste of you very *refined* critics, you should throw out its most shining parts. I shall forgive you, however, if you should; and shall, upon some future occasion, successfully make use of what your fastidious niceness rejects: as, in some future composition, I doubt not to receive much applause, for those different expressions which I have interlined. I suspected you would call every thing unnatural and bombast which is raised above the style of ordinary language; I have thought proper, therefore, for your ease, to vary the phrase, and take it somewhat lower, or rather, indeed, to debase it; though you, I know, (for I must continue to rally your *nice* taste,) will esteem it an improvement. Thus far, in order to make you smile in the midst of your serious occupations, I have indulged a jocose humour; but, without doubt, I am wonderous serious when I add, that I expect to be reimbursed my charges in sending a courier express with this petition. Now are you not disposed to condemn it, not only in some of its parts, but in the whole, and insist, that you ought not to pay for a thing which is absolutely of no value? Farewell.

LETTER XIII.

TO FEROX.

I FIND, by your letter, that you do, and do not, study. This will appear a little enigmatical, till I explain it: you expressly say, indeed, that you have bidden adieu to study; but such a vein of elegance runs through your whole letter, that it is impossible it should have been composed without much thought; unless you are privileged beyond the rest of mankind, and can express such admirable sentiments, in so polished a style, carelessly, and with a flowing pen. Farewell.

LETTER XIV.

TO CORELLIA.

YOU are truly generous, to desire and insist, that I take for my share of the estate you purchased of me, not after the rate of seven hundred thousand sesterces* for the whole, as my freedman sold it to you, but in the proportion of nine hundred thousand, agreeable to what you gave to the farmers of the twentiethst for their part. But I must de-

* See Letter XI. of this Book.

† Augustus imposed a tax of the twentieth part of all legacies and inheritances, which he appropriated to the support of the army. This was deemed a heavy imposition; and accordingly it was eased, in several points, by succeeding emperors, particularly by Trajan, as appears from our author's noble panegyric upon him, (*Sect.* 37. &c.); but it was not wholly abolished till the time of Antoninus Pius.

sire and insist, in my turn, that you consider not only what is suitable to your character, but what is worthy of mine; and that you suffer me to oppose your inclination in this single instance, with the same warmth that I obey it in all others. Farewell.

LETTER XV.

TO SATURNINUS.

YOU ask me, *how I spend my time?* You know how much of it is disposed in the business of my post; what remains, I devote to the service of my friends, and sometimes to my books; and although I will not venture to affirm it would be better, I am sure it would be happier, if I could say, that the latter not only *sometimes*, but constantly engages me. I should be concerned to hear, that your occupations are of the sort least agreeable to your inclinations, if I did not know, that to be active in the affairs of one's native corporation, and in settling controversies among one's friends there, are employments of the most laudable kind.

I was well persuaded the company of our friend Priscus would be extremely agreeable to you, sensible as I am of the amiable simplicity and politeness of his manners; but I had yet to learn, (what I had the pleasure to be informed by your letter,) that he is also the most grateful of men, by so kindly remembering the little services I have done him. Farewell.

LETTER XVI.

TO FABATUS.

CALESTRIUS TIRO, to whom I am united by every public and private connection, is in the number of my most intimate friends. We served together in the army, and were both of us quæstors* at the same time to Cæsar. He got the start of me, indeed, in the tribunate, by the privilege which the law gives to those who have children ;† but I overtook him in the prætorship, by the indulgence of the emperor, who dispensed with my wanting a year of the legal age for that office. I frequently retire with him to his country villas, and he often takes the benefit of change of air at mine. He is lately appointed proconsul of Bœtica, and proposes to pass through Ticinum,‡ in his way to that province. I hope, and indeed am well assured, I can easily prevail with him to turn out of his road to your house, if you should have an inclination to make any of those slaves free before a magistrate,

* An office resembling that of our secretary of state.

† A law at first proposed by Augustus, but which afterwards, with several alterations, passed in the consulship of Papius and Poppeas, A. U. 762; in which, amongst other things, it was enacted, "That all magistrates should take precedence according to the number of their children; that, in elections, those candidates should be preferred who had the most numerous offspring; and, that any person might stand sooner than ordinary for an office, if he had as many children as he wanted years to be legally capable of such a dignity."—Vid. *Lipsii Excurs. ad Tacit.* an. 1. 3.

‡ Pavia, in the duchy of Milan.

to whom you have already given their liberty* in the presence of your friends. You need be under no apprehension that he will look upon this as a trouble, as I am sure he would willingly travel round the world for my sake. I beg you, therefore, to lay aside all scruple, and only consider what will be most agreeable to yourself; for, be assured, he will take as much pleasure in executing my requests, as I do in obeying yours. Farewell.

LETTER XVII.

TO CELER.

EVERY author has his particular reasons for reciting his works; mine, I have often said, is in order, if any error should have escaped my own observation, (as no doubt is probable,) to have it pointed out to me. I cannot therefore but be surprised to find, (what your letter assures me,) that there are some who blame me for reciting my speeches; unless, perhaps, they are of opinion, that this is the single species of composition which ought to be privileged from correction. If so, I would willingly ask them, why they allow, (if perchance they vouchsafe to allow,) that history may be recited, since it is a work which ought to be devoted to truth, not ostentation? or why tragedy, as it is composed for action and the stage, not for being read to a private audience? or lyric poetry, as it is not a reader, but a chorus of voices and instruments that it requires? They will reply, perhaps, that, in

* This last method only discharged them from servitude, but did not entitle them to the privileges of complete freedom.

the instances mentioned, custom has made the practice in question usual: I should be glad to know, then, if they think the person who first introduced this practice is to be condemned? Besides, the rehearsal of orations is no unprecedented thing, either with us or the Grecians. Still, perhaps, they will insist that it can answer no purpose to recite a speech, which has previously been delivered in public. There would be some force in this objection, if one were immediately to repeat the very same performance, and to the very same audience; but if you make several additions and alterations, if your audience is composed partly of the same, and partly of different persons, and the recital is at some distance of time, why is there less propriety in rehearsing your speech than in publishing it? "But it is difficult," say the objectors, "to give satisfaction to an audience by the mere reading of a speech;" *that* is a reason which concerns the particular skill and pains of the person who rehearses, but by no means holds against recitation in general. In fact, it is not while I am reading, but when I am read, that I aim at approbation; and upon this principle it is, that I omit no sort of method which may render my performances more correct. Accordingly, I again and again revise my compositions in private; afterwards read them to two or three friends; and then give them to a few others to make their remarks. If I have still any doubt concerning the justness of their observations, I carefully reconsider them with another friend or two; and then finally recite them to a more numerous assembly. This is the time, believe me, when

I find myself best qualified to exercise all the severity of criticism; for my attention rises in proportion to my solicitude; as nothing renders the judgment so acute to discern errors, as that modest respect and reverence one feels for one's audience upon those occasions. For tell me, whether you would not be infinitely less affected, if you were to speak before a single person only, though ever so learned, than before a numerous assembly, even though it were composed of none but illiterate people? When you rise up to plead, are you not at that juncture, above all others, most diffident of your powers? and do you not wish, I will not say some particular parts only, but that the whole frame of your intended speech were altered, especially if the circle should be large in which you are to speak? for there is something in a crowded audience, even of the most vulgar kind, that strikes one with awe. And if you suspect, at the first opening of your speech, that you are not well received, do you not find all the energy of your mind weakened, and the whole strength of your abilities sink under you? The reason I imagine to be, that there is I know not what dignity in the collective sentiments of a multitude; and though, separately, their judgment is, perhaps, of little weight, yet, when united, it becomes respectable. Agreeably to this notion, Pomponius Secundus, the famous tragic poet, whenever his friends and he differed about the retaining or rejecting any passage in his dramatic writings, used to say, "I appeal to the people!"* and, according-

* There is a kind of witticism in this expression, which will be lost to the mere English reader, unless he be informed, that the

ly, by their silence or applause, adopted either his own or his friends' sentiments; such was the regard he paid to the populace!* Whether with justice

Romans had a privilege, confirmed to them by several laws which passed in the earlier ages of the republic, of appealing from the decisions of the magistrates to the general assembly of the people; and the form of appeal was in the same words which Pomponius here applies to a different purpose.

* However unsafe, in general, an appeal to the vulgar notions may be, there are yet some cases in which their sentiments have ever been received by the judicious, as decisive. The merit of performances in the persuasive, or imitative arts, so far as the mere raising or representing the passions are concerned, will best be tried by the effect they produce on plain and untutored minds; for, as Tully observes, "That artist, who has nature for his object, must certainly fall short of the truth of his art, where nature is not moved." *De Orat.* lib. 1. The custom which prevailed among the Romans, of reciting their works of genius in the porticoes and places of public resort, took its rise probably from the same notion of a general and innate taste being implanted in all mankind of what is just and natural in the moving arts. It was upon this principle, likewise, that the great masters in painting and statuary, in ancient Greece, exhibited their performances to public view, and corrected them by the popular feelings. There is a remarkable story of Annibal Carrachi, which shows he appealed to the same standard. He observed, that a famous picture of Domenichino's, representing the flagellation of St. Andrew, made a very strong impression upon an old woman, who, at the same time, seemed little affected with another picture of a martyrdom, done by Guido, which was placed near it. A debate afterwards happening about the respective merit of these two performances, Carrachi decided the dispute by only relating this fact.* Thus, as the poet observes,

———The people's voice is odd,
It is, and it is not, the voice of God. POPE.

* The well known appeal of Moliere to his old housekeeper, cannot but occur to the reader as a remarkable instance of the same kind.

or not, does not concern me to determine, as I never recite my works publicly, but only before a select number of friends, whose presence I respect, and whose judgment I value; in a word, whose opinions I observe as if they were so many individuals I had separately consulted, at the same time that I stand in as much awe before them, as I should before the most numerous assembly. What Cicero says of the pen, will, in my opinion, hold equally true of that dread we have of the public: "It is the most rigid critic imaginable."* The very fear of reciting, of entering an assembly, and the reverential concern when one appears there; each of these circumstances being impressed upon the composer's mind, tend to improve and perfect his performance. Upon the whole, therefore, I cannot repent of a practice which I have experienced to be so exceedingly beneficial; and far from being discouraged by the trifling objections of these censors, I request you to point out to me if there be any other method of correction, that I may also adopt it; for nothing can sufficiently satisfy my anxiety to render my compositions perfect. I reflect what an arduous adventure it is to resign any work into the hands of the public; and I cannot but be persuaded, that frequent revisals, and many consultations, must go to the finishing of a performance, which one desires should universally and for ever please. Farewell.

* "*Stilus est optimus et præstantissimus dicendi effector atque magister.*"—De Orat. lib. 33.

LETTER XVIII.

TO CANINIUS.

YOU ask my advice in what manner you shall settle the sum of money which you have presented to our fellow-citizens of Comum for an annual festival, so as to secure the just application of it after your death. Your question proceeds from a truly generous principle, but the answer is not very easy. If you pay down the money to the community, there is great danger that it will be squandered away. If you settle lands for that purpose, they will probably be ill cultivated, as those of the public usually are. Upon the whole, then, I can think of no method more eligible than what I pursued myself in a parellel instance. Intending to give 500,000 sesterces* for the maintenance of children who were born of good families, I made a fictitious sale to the public agent of an estate in land which was worth considerably more, who reconveyed it back to me, charged with a yearly rent of 30,000 sesterces.† By these means the principal was secured to the community, at the same time that the interest was certain, and the estate itself (as it was of much greater value than the rent charged upon

* About L. 4000 of our money.

† About L. 240 of our money. It should seem, by this passage, that the rate of interest of money upon mortgage among the Romans in Pliny's time, or rather at the time when he wrote this letter, (for no doubt it varied with public circumstances,) was at six per cent.; as, in the common way of loan upon personal security, it appears, from the sixty-second letter of the tenth book, to have been so high as twelve per cent.

it) was always sure of finding a tenant. I am well aware, indeed, that, by this method, I have actually given more than I appear to have done, as the value of the whole estate will be much lessened by the incumbrance with which it is charged. But the interest of the public ought always to supersede every private consideration, as what is eternal is to be preferred to what is mortal; and a man of true generosity will study in what manner to render his benefaction most advantageous, rather than how he may bestow it with least expence. Farewell.

LETTER XIX.

TO PRISCUS.

I AM deeply afflicted by the ill state of health of my friend Fannia, which she contracted during her attendance on Junia, one of the vestal virgins. She engaged in this good office at first voluntarily, Junia being her relation; but was afterwards appointed to it by an order from the college of priests: for these virgins, when any indisposition makes it necessary to remove them from the temple of Vesta, are always delivered into the care and custody of some venerable matron. It was her assiduity in the execution of this charge that occasioned her present disorder, which is a continual fever, attended with a cough, that increases daily. She is extremely emaciated, and every part of her frame seems in a total decay, except her spirits; those, indeed, she preserves in their full vigour; and with a fortitude worthy the wife of Helvidius, and the

daughter of Thrasea. In every other article her health is so greatly impaired, that I am more than apprehensive upon her account; I am deeply afflicted. I grieve, my friend, that so excellent a woman is going to be removed from the world, which will never, perhaps, again behold her equal. How eminent is her chastity, her piety, her gravity, her courage! She twice followed her husband into exile, and once was banished upon his account. For Senecio, when he was arraigned for writing the life of Helvidius, having said, in his defence, that he composed that work at the request of Fannia; Metius Carus, with a stern and threatening air, asked her whether it was true? She acknowledged it was: and when he farther questioned her, whether she supplied him likewise with materials for that purpose, and whether her mother was privy to this transaction? she boldly confessed the former, but absolutely denied the latter. In short, throughout her whole examination, not a word escaped her which betrayed the least timidity. On the contrary, she had the courage to preserve a copy of those very books, which the senate, overawed by the tyranny of the times, had ordered to be suppressed, and the effects of the author to be confiscated; taking with her, as her companions, those obnoxious volumes, which had been the cause of her exile. How pleasing is her conversation; how polite her address; and (which seldom unites in the same character) how venerable her whole demeanour! She will hereafter, I am well persuaded, be pointed out as a model to all wives, and perhaps be deemed worthy to be held forth as an example

of fortitude even to our sex. I am sure, at least, that we, who have the pleasure of seeing and conversing with her, contemplate her with the same admiration as those female heroines, who are celebrated in ancient story. I confess, I cannot but tremble for this illustrious house, as it seems shaken to its very foundation, and falling into ruins with this excellent woman; for, though she will leave descendants behind her, yet what a height of virtue must they attain, what glorious actions must they perform, ere the world will be persuaded, that she was not the last of her family! It is an aggravating circumstance of affliction to me, that, by her death, I seem to lose a second time her mother; that worthy mother (and what can I say higher in her praise) of so amiable a woman! who, as she was restored to me in her daughter, so she will now again be taken from me, and the loss of Fannia will thus pierce my heart at once with a fresh stab, and tear open a former wound. I so truly loved and honoured them both, that I know not which had the greatest share of my affection and esteem; and it was a question they wished might ever remain undetermined. In their prosperity and their adversity I performed every good office to them in my power, and was their comforter in exile, as well as their avenger at their return. But I have not yet discharged all the obligations I owe them, and am so much the more solicitous for the recovery of this lady, that I may have time to acquit the full claim she has upon my kindest offices. Such is the anxiety under which I write this letter! But if some friendly power should hap-

pily give me occasion to exchange it for sentiments of joy, I shall not complain of the alarms I now suffer. Farewell.

LETTER XX.

TO TACITUS.

I HAVE perused your book with all the attention I was master of, and have marked the passages I think should be altered, and those which I am of opinion ought entirely to be thrown out. It is as habitual to me to speak truth, as it is agreeable to you to hear it; and indeed none are more patient of censure, than those who have the best claim to applause. I now expect, in return, your observations upon that treatise of mine which I lately sent you. How agreeable, how noble, is such a commerce! and how am I pleased with the thought, that posterity, if it shall at all concern itself with us, will not cease to mention, with what harmony, what freedom, what fidelity, we lived together! It will be an instance as remarkable as it is uncommon, that two persons, nearly of the same age and rank, and of some character in the republic of letters, (for, since I join myself with you, I am obliged to speak of your merit with reserve,) should thus mutually assist and promote each other's studies. When I was a very young man, and you in the prime of your glory and reputation, I endeavoured to follow your steps, and was desirous to be considered as next in fame to you;

But next, with many a length between!*

* Virg. Æn. Pitt's Transl.

And though there were, at that time, many celebrated geniuses in Rome, yet you, of all others, appeared to me, not only most worthy to be my model, but, from a similitude of our dispositions, most easy for me to copy. It is particularly agreeable to me therefore to find, that, in all companies where literature is the topic of conversation, we are always mentioned together, and that my name immediately follows yours. It is true, there are some who prefer you to me, as others, on the contrary, give me the advantage; but I am little solicitous in what order we are placed, so that we stand together; for, in my estimation, whoever is next to you must necessarily precede every one else. You even see, in wills* (unless in the case of particular friendship to either of us) we are always equally considered, and that the legacies bequeathed to us are generally the same, both in number and value. Since, therefore, we are thus united by a similitude of studies, manners, reputation, and even by testamentary donations, those last instances of

* "It was the peculiar custom of Rome, for the clients and dependents of families, to bequeath, at their death, to their patrons, some considerable part of their estates, as the most effectual testimony of their respect and gratitude; and the more a man received in this way, the more it redounded to his credit. Thus Cicero mentions it to the honour of Lucullus, that, while he governed Asia as proconsul, many great estates were left him by will. And Nepos tells us, in praise of Atticus, that he succeeded to many inheritances of the same kind, bequeathed to him on no other account than of his friendly and amiable temper. Cicero, when he was falsely reproached by Antony, with being neglected on these occasions, declared, in his reply, that he had gained, from this single article, about two hundred thousand pounds."—*Middleton's Life of Tully*, Vol. II. 514.

the world's good opinion; should not these circumstances tend to enflame us mutually with the most ardent affection? Farewell.

LETTER XXI.

TO CORNUTUS.

I OBEY, my dearest colleague, your commands to favour the weakness of my eyes; and accordingly I came hither in a covered litter, in which I was as much sheltered as if I had been in my chamber. I forbear too (with reluctance indeed, however I do forbear) both writing and reading; and it is with my ears only that I study. By drawing the curtains of my chamber, I make it gloomy, but not dark; and when I walk in my covered portico, I shut the lower range of windows, and by that means enjoy as much shade as light. Thus I endeavour to accustom myself to the light by degrees. The bath being of service in this case, I allow myself the use of it, as also of wine, because it is not judged prejudicial, but I drink it with great moderation. I do so, you know, at all times, but particularly now that I have one* who narrowly observes me. I received the pullet with great pleasure, as coming from you; and weak as my eyes still are, they are strong enough, however, to discern it is extremely fat. Farewell.

* Meaning his wife, perhaps, or his physician.

LETTER XXII.

TO FALCO.

YOU will not wonder I so earnestly pressed you to confer the tribunate upon my friend, when you shall be informed, who and what he is; and as you have complied with my request, I may now acquaint you with his name and character. It is Cornelius Minutianus, who, both in rank and merit, is the ornament of that province to which I owe my birth. His family and fortune are noble, and yet he cultivates science with as much application, as if the narrowness of his circumstances rendered it necessary. He is a most upright judge, a most strenuous advocate, a most faithful friend. You will look upon the obligation as done to yourself, when you shall have an opportunity of becoming better acquainted with this excellent person, who (not to speak in too lofty terms of so modest a man) is equal to all the honours and titles that can be conferred upon him. Farewell.

LETTER XXIII.

TO FABATUS.*

I GREATLY rejoice, that you have so much recovered your strength, as to be able to take so long a journey as to Mediolanum,† in order to meet Tiro; but, that you may continue to enjoy that hap-

* His wife's grandfather.

† Milan.

piness, let me entreat you to spare yourself a fatigue so improper for a man of your years. I must even insist, that you wait for him at Comum, and that you do not stir out of your own house, nor even out of your chamber, to receive him. As I love him with the affection of a brother, it would be unreasonable he should expect from the person whom I hónour as my parent, a point of ceremony which he would spare his own. Farewell.

LETTER XXIV.

TO GEMINIUS.

NUMIDIA QUADRATILLA is lately dead, having lived almost to her eightieth year. She enjoyed, till her last sickness, an uninterrupted state of health, with a strength and firmness of body unusual to persons of her sex. She has left a very prudent will, having disposed of two-thirds of her estate to her grandson, and the rest to her granddaughter. With the young lady I have little acquaintance, but the grandson is one of the most favourite and intimate friends I have. He is a person of singular worth; and his merit entitles him to the affection of a relation, even where his blood does not. Though he is extremely beautiful, he escaped every malicious imputation, both whilst a boy and when a youth: he was a husband at four-and-twenty, and would have been a father, if Providence had not disappointed his hopes. Notwithstanding he resided in the family with his grandmother, who was exceedingly devoted to the

pleasures of the town, yet he observed great severity of conduct himself, at the same time that he behaved to her with the utmost respect. She retained a set of pantomimes,* and was an encourger of this sort of people, to a degree inconsistent with a person of her sex and rank. But Quadratus never appeared at these entertainments, not only when she exhibited them in the theatre, but even in her own house; nor indeed did she require him to be present. I once heard her say, when she was recommending the studies of her grandson to my inspection, that it was her custom, in order to pass away some of those unemployed hours with which female life abounds, to amuse herself with playing at chess,†

* These pantomimes were, as their name imports, universal mimics, whose humour consisted in imitating the peculiar manner and gesture of particular persons. They were at first introduced upon the stage, as Scaliger supposes, to succeed the chorus and comedies, and divert the audience with buffoon postures and antic dances. In after times, those interludes became distinct entertainments, and were exhibited apart from other plays. But the use of these pantomimes was not confined to the stage only, for Suetonius informs us, they were introduced in funeral solemnities, in order to represent the manner of the deceased.

† This game, among the Romans, seems to have been much of the same nature, though, by Quadratilla dismissing her grandson when she played at it, not in the same estimation, as a *female* amusement, with modern chess. Their men, which they called *calculi*, or *latrunculi*, were made sometimes of wax, and sometimes of glass, and were distinguished by black and white colours. The invention of it has been carried by some so high as the siege of Troy; but Peter Texeiras, in his History of Persia, (as quoted by Pitiscus in his *Lex. Antiq. Rom.*) imagines it to be of Persian original: "Because," says he, "in all countries where this game is played, the names of the men are either the same with, or plainly a corruption of, those given to them in the Persian language." Allusions to this game are frequent in the classic writers; but the

or seeing the mimicry of her pantomimes; but that, whenever she engaged in either of those amusements, she constantly dismissed her grandson to his studies: a dismission which proceeded, I am inclined to think, as much out of a certain reverential awe she felt upon those occasions in the presence of the youth, as from her affection towards him. I was a good deal surprised, as I believe you will be, at

fullest description of it is contained in the following lines, taken from the little poem addressed to Piso, which is to be found at the end of some editions of Lucan, and is generally ascribed to that author:

Te si forte juvat, studiorum pondere fessum,
Non languere tamen, lususque movere per artem,
Callidiore modo tabulla variatur aperta
Calculus, et vitreo peraguntur milite bella,
Ut niveus nigros, nunc et niger alliget albos.
Sed tibi quis non terga dedit? quis te duce cessit
Calculus? aut quis non periturus perdidit hostem?
Mille modis acies tua dimicat: ille pe tentem
Dum fugit, ipse rapit: longo venit ille recessu
Qui stetit in speculis: hic se committere rixæ
Audet, et in prædam venientem decipit hostem
Ancipites subit ille moras, similisque ligato
Obligat ipse duos: hic ad majora movetur,
Ut citus et fracta prorumpat in agmina mandra,
Clausaque dejecto populatur mœnia vallo.
Interea, sectis quamvis accerima surgunt
Prælia militibus, plena tamen ipse phalange,
Aut etiam pauco spoliata milite vincis,
Et tibi captivæ resonat manus utraque turbæ.
Ad Pison. Poematios.

When, to relieve the labours of thy mind,
Thou turn'st from deep research in arts refined,
Not in soft indolence you waste the hour,
But happier genius still exerts its power;
To mimic war the radiant troops are led,
And martial ranks the varied table spread;

what he told me the last time the pontifical games* were exhibited. As we were coming out of the theatre together, where we had been entertained with her pantomimes, "Do you know," said he, "this is the first time I ever saw Quadratilla's freedman dance?" Such was the striking declaration her grandson made! while a set of men, of a far different character, in order to do honour to Quadratilla, (I am ashamed to call it *honour*,) with the lowest and grossest flattery, were running up and

There sable bands, and *here* a snow-white train,
With doubtful fate of war the fight maintain.
But, who with thee shall dare dispute the field?
Led by thy hand, what warrior knows to yield?
Or if he fall, he falls with glorious pride,
His vanquish'd foe extended by his side.
Unnumber'd stratagems thy forces try;
Now artful feign, and only feign, to fly;
Now boldly rushes, midst the ranks of war,
The chief, who viewed the slaughtering scene from far.
This bravely daring in the arduous toil,
Repels the host advancing to the spoil;
While cautious *that* moves dreadful on, and slow,
And fraudful meditates the certain blow.
What though in guise a slave he seems, in chains,
Two captives he in durance close detains:
But see, yon hero, with impetuous haste,
Bursts through the ranks, and lays the ramparts waste!
While thus the mighty battle glows around,
And prostrate chiefs bestrew the well-fought ground,
Full and unbroken, lo! thy squadrons stand,
Or scarce one warrior lost of thy command;
The captive crowds thy victory proclaim,
And foes confess thy undisputed fame.

* The priests, as well as other magistrates, exhibited public games to the people when they entered upon their office. It should seem, by what follows, that Quadratilla had lent her troop of pantomimes to honour the celebration of these pontifical games.

down the theatre, affecting the utmost admiration and rapture at the performances of these her pantomimes, and then imitating, in musical chant, the *mien and manner* of their lady patroness. But now all that these theatrical flatterers have obtained, in return, is only a few trifling legacies, which they have the mortification to receive from an heir, who never but once deigned to be present at Quadratilla's shows.—I send you this account, as knowing you are not displeased to hear the news of the town, and because, when any occurrence has rejoiced me, I love to renew it again, by communicating it to my friends. And indeed the laudable affection which Quadratilla has shewn in her wil to her two heirs, and the particular honour done therein to that excellent youth her grandson, has afforded me a very sensible satisfaction: as I am extremely glad, too, that the house which once belonged to Cassius, the founder and chief of the Cassian* school, is come into the possession of a person not less respectable than its former master. For my worthy friend will fill it as he ought, and its ancient lustre will again revive under Quadratus, who, I am persuaded, will prove as eminent an orator, as Cassius was a lawyer. Farewell.

* A famous lawyer, who flourished in the reign of the emperor Claudius: those who followed his juridical opinions were said to be Cassiani, or of the school of Cassius.

LETTER XXV.

TO RUFUS.

WHAT numbers of learned men does modesty conceal, or love of retirement withdraw, from public fame! and yet, when we are going to speak or recite in numerous assemblies, it is the judgment only of popular and ostentatious talents, of which we stand in awe; whereas we have more reason to revere the decisions of those who cultivate the sciences in contemplative life, and form their opinions of works of genius in privacy and silence, undistracted by the noise of clamorous assemblies; an observation which I give you upon experience. Terentius Junior, having passed through the military offices suitable to a person of equestrian rank, and executed with great integrity the post of receiver-general of the revenues in Narbonensian Gaul,* retired to his estate; preferring the enjoyment of an uninterrupted tranquillity, to those honours which his services had merited. He invited me lately to his house, where, looking upon him only as a worthy master of a family and an industrious farmer, I started such rural topics of conversation, in which I imagined he was most versed. But he soon turned the discourse, and displaying a great fund of knowledge, entered upon subjects of

* One of the four principal divisions of ancient Gaul: it extended from the Pyrenean mountains, which separate France from Spain, to the Alps, which divide it from Italy, and comprehended Languedoc, Provence, Dauphiny, and Savoy.

literature. I was astonished at the elegance with which he expressed himself, both in Latin and Greek! for he is so perfectly well skilled in each, that whichever he speaks, seems to be the language wherein he particularly excels. How extensive is his reading! how tenacious his memory! You would not imagine him the inhabitant of an ignorant country village, but a citizen of the learned Athens. In short, his conversation has increased my solicitude concerning my works, and taught me to revere the judgment of these studious country gentlemen, as much as that of more known and distinguished literati. Let me persuade you to consider them in the same light; for, believe me, upon a careful observation, you will often find in the literary, as well as military world, most powerful abilities concealed under a rustic garb. Farewell.

LETTER XXVI.

TO MAXIMUS.

THE lingering disorder of a friend of mine gave me occasion lately to reflect, that we are always in the best moral disposition when afflicted with sickness. Where is the man, who, labouring under the pain of any distemper, is either solicited by avarice, or enflamed with lust? At such a season he is neither the slave of love, nor the fool of ambition; he looks with indifference upon the charms of wealth, and is contented with ever so small a portion of it, as being upon the point of leaving even that little. It is *then* he recollects

there are Gods, and that he himself is but a man :* no mortal is *then* the object of his envy, his admiration, or his contempt ; and having no malice to gratify, the tales of slander excite not his attention : his dreams run only upon the refreshment of baths† and fountains. These are the supreme objects of his thoughts and wishes ; while he resolves, if he should recover, to pass the remainder of his days disengaged from the cares and business of the world ; that is, in innocence and happiness. I may, therefore, lay down to you and myself a short rule, which the philosophers have endeavoured to inculcate at the expence of many words, and even many volumes ; that " we should realize in health, those resolutions we form in sickness." Farewell.

LETTER XXVII.

TO SURA.

THE present recess from business affords you leisure to communicate, and me to receive, in-

* The awakening power of adversity, in general, is so beautifully described by the banished duke in Shakespeare's *As you like it*, that it will not, perhaps, be deemed foreign to the purpose to produce it as a parallel passage, especially as the sentiment in the second line is exactly the same with this of Pliny's before us :

This is no flattery : these are counsellors
That *feelingly persuade me what I am.*
Sweet are the uses of adversity,
Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head.
Act. 2. Sc. 1.

† The ancient physicians advised bathing as of sovereign efficacy in various disorders.

formation. I am very desirous to know your opinion concerning spectres; whether you believe they have a real existence, and are a sort of divinities, or are only the visionary impressions of a terrified imagination? What particularly inclines me to give credit to their reality, is a story* which I lately heard of Curtius Rufus. When he was in low circumstances, and unknown in the world, he attended the governor of Africa into that province. One evening, as he was walking in the public portico, he was extremely surprised with the apparition of a woman, whose figure and beauty were more than human. She told him she was the tutelar power who presided over Africa, and was come to inform him of the future events of his life: that he should go back to Rome, where he should be raised to the highest honours; should return to that province invested with the proconsular dignity, and there should die. Accordingly, every circumstance of this prediction was actually accomplished. It is said, farther, that, upon his arrival at Carthage, as he was coming out of the ship, the same figure accosted him upon the shore. It is certain, at least, that, being seized with a fit of illness, though there were no symptoms in his case that led his attendants to despair, he instantly gave up all hope of recovery; judging, it should seem, of the truth of the future part of the prophecy, by that which had already been fulfilled, and of the misfortune which threatened him, by the success which he had experienced. To this story, let me add anoth-

* This story is likewise related by Tacitus in the 11th book of his Annals, chap. 21.

er, not less remarkable than the former, but attended with more terrifying circumstances; and I will give it you exactly as it was related to me. There was at Athens* a large and commodious house, which lay under the disrepute of being haunted. In the dead of the night, a noise, resembling the clashing of iron, was frequently heard, which, if you listened more attentively, sounded like the rattling of chains. At first it seemed distant, but approached nearer by degrees, till a spectre appeared in the form of an old man, extremely meagre and ghastly, with a long beard and dishevelled hair, rattling the chains on his feet and hands. The distressed inhabitants, in the mean while, passed their nights under the most dreadful terrors imaginable. This, as it broke their rest, ruined also their health, and brought on distempers, which, together with their constant horrors of mind, proved in the end fatal to their lives. Even in the day time, though the spirit did not then appear, yet the impression remained so strong upon their imaginations, that it still seemed before their eyes, and kept them in perpetual alarm. By these means the house was at last deserted, as being deemed absolutely uninhabitable; so that it was now entirely abandoned to the ghost. However, in hopes that some tenant might be found, who was ignorant of this very alarming circumstance which attended it, a bill was put up, giving notice, that it was either to be let or sold. It happened that Athenodorus, the philosopher, came to Athens at this

* Lucian ridicules a story pretty much resembling this, but lays the scene of it in Corinth. Vid. *Lucian. Philopseud.*

time, and reading the bill, enquired the price.—The extraordinary cheapness raised his suspicion; nevertheless, when he heard the whole story, he was so far from being discouraged, that he was more strongly inclined to hire it, and, in short, actually did so. When it grew towards evening, he ordered a couch to be prepared for him in the fore part of the house, and after calling for a light, together with his pencil and tablets, he directed all his people to retire. But, that his mind might not, for want of employment, be open to the vain terrors of imaginary noises and spirits, he applied himself to writing with the utmost attention. The first part of the night passed in usual silence, when at length the chains began to rattle: however, he neither lifted up his eyes, nor laid down his pencil, but diverted his observation by pursuing his studies with greater earnestness. The noise increased, and advanced nearer, till it seemed at the door, and at last in the chamber. He looked up, and saw the ghost exactly in the manner it had been described to him: it stood before him, beckoning with the finger. Athenodorus made a sign with his hand, that it should wait a little, and threw his eyes again upon his papers; but the ghost still rattling his chains in his ears, he looked up and saw him beckoning as before. Upon this he immediately arose, and, with the light in his hand, followed it. The spectre slowly stalked along, as if encumbered with his chains, and turning into the area of the house, suddenly vanished. Athenodorus, being thus deserted, make a mark with some grass and leaves where the spirit left him.

The next day, he gave information to the magistrates, and advised them to order that spot to be dug up. This was accordingly done, and the skeleton of a man in chains was there found; for, the body having lain a considerable time in the ground, was putrified, and had mouldered away from the fetters. The bones being collected together, were publicly buried; and thus, after the ghost was appeased by the proper ceremonies, the house was haunted no more. This story I believe upon the credit of others: what I am going to mention, I give you upon my own. I have a freedman named Marcus, who is by no means illiterate. One* night, as he and his younger brother were lying together, he fancied he saw some person upon his bed, who took out a pair of scissars, and cut off the hair from the top part of his head: in the morning, it appeared the boy's hair was actually cut, and the clippings lay scattered about the floor. A short time after, an event of the like

* Those who are unacquainted with the genius of the religion of ancient Rome, may be inclined to think meanly of our author's judgment, from this and the following story; but when it is remembered, that the greatest characters which we meet with among that illustrious people, are all strongly marked with a vein of superstition, no particular charge of weak credulity can, with justice, be brought from hence against Pliny. The truth is, it was a national turn, and countenanced by the constitution of their government, insomuch, that omens, even of the lowest kind, were considered previous to every step either of foreign or domestic concern: and the wisest and gravest of their historians, the judicious Livy not excepted, have given into accounts of this nature. Even a noble historian among our own countrymen has not scrupled to insert a relation of the same kind and credibility, in his History of the Civil Wars.

nature contributed to give credit to the former story. A young lad of my family was sleeping in his apartment with the rest of his companions, when two persons, clad in white, came in, as he says, through the windows, and cut off his hair as he lay; and having finished the operation, returned the same way they entered. The next morning it was found, that this boy had been served just as the other, and with the very same circumstance of the hair spread about the room. Nothing remarkable, indeed, followed these events, unless that I escaped a prosecution, in which, if Domitian (during whose reign this happened) had lived some time longer, I should certainly have been involved. For, after the death of that emperor, articles of impeachment against me were found in his scrutore, which had been exhibited by Carus. It may therefore be conjectured, since it is customary for persons under any public accusation to let their hair grow, this cutting off the hair of my servants was a sign I should escape the imminent danger that threatened me. Let me desire you then maturely to consider this question. The subject merits your examination; as, I trust, I am not myself altogether unworthy to participate of the abundance of your superior knowledge. And though you should, with your usual skepticism, balance between two opinions, yet I hope you will throw the weightier reasons on one side, lest, whilst I consult you in order to have my doubt settled, you should dismiss me in the same suspense and indecision that occasioned you the present application. Farewell.

LETTER XXVIII.

TO SEPTITIUS.

THERE are, it seems, certain persons, who, in your company, have blamed me, as being, upon all occasions, too lavish in commendation of my friends. I not only acknowledge the charge, but glory in it; for can there be a nobler error than an overflowing benevolence? But still, who are these, let me ask, that are better acquainted with my friends than I am myself? Yet grant there are any such, why will they deny me the satisfaction of so pleasing an error? For, supposing my friends deserve not the high encomiums I give them, certainly I am happy in believing they do. Let them recommend then this ungenerous discernment to those who imagine, (and their number is not inconsiderable) that they show their judgment when they indulge their censure. As for myself, they will never persuade me that I can love my friends* too well. Farewell.

LETTER XXIX.

TO MONTANUS.

IT would raise your laughter first, and then your indignation, and perhaps, after having compos-

* Balzac, with his usual happiness of allusion, observes, "*Il y a des rivieres qui ne font jamais tant de bien que quand elles se debordent; de meme l'amitié n' a rien de meilleur que l'excez.*"

ed yourself a little, you would be inclined to laugh again, when you read what I am going to mention, and which you will scarcely credit without ocular inspection. I lately observed, in the Tiburtine road,* near the first mile-stone, a monument erected to the memory of Pallas,† with the following inscription: THE SENATE DECREED TO HIM, AS A REWARD FOR HIS FIDELITY AND AFFECTION TO HIS PATRONS, THE HONOUR OF THE PRÆTORIAN ORNAMENTS,‡ TOGETHER WITH THE SUM OF FIFTEEN MILLION OF SESTERCES:§ BUT HE WAS CONTENTED WITH ACCEPTING ONLY THE HONOUR. I am not indeed apt to wonder at distinctions of this sort, which are oftener the gift of Fortune than of Judgment; but I could not help reflecting, when I read this inscription, how contemptible and ridiculous are those honours, which are thus sometimes thrown away upon dirt and infamy; which such a rascal, in short, had the assurance both to accept and to refuse, and then set himself forth to posterity, as an example of singular moderation! Yet why should it raise my indignation? rather let me treat it as a matter of derision, that persons of this vile character may

* The road leading to Tivoli, in Campania.

† He was at first a slave in the court of Claudius Cæsar, who afterwards gave him his freedom, and raised him to his chief favour. The patrons mentioned in this inscription are that emperor and his consort Agrippina, to whom Pallas had likewise recommended himself by some signal services.

‡ The senate, as a mark of honourable distinction, sometimes decreed the privilege of wearing the ornaments peculiar to certain dignities, to persons who had not enjoyed the office to which those ornaments were annexed.

§ About L.320,000 of our money.

not flatter themselves they have obtained any thing truly enviable, when their honours only expose them to severer ridicule. Farewell.

LETTER XXX.

TO GENITOR.

I AM extremely concerned to find that you have lost your pupil; a youth, as your letter assures me, of such great hopes. Can I want to be informed, that his sickness and death must have interrupted your studies; knowing, as I do, with what exactness you fill up every duty of life, and how warm your affection is to all those to whom you give your esteem? As for myself, the usual business of Rome pursues me to this place; and I am not out of the reach of people even here, who appeal to me, either as their judge or their arbitrator. Nor is this all; for, not only the farmers claim a sort of prescription to try my patience as they please, by their continual complaints; but also the necessity of letting out my farms gives me much trouble, as it is exceedingly difficult to find proper tenants. For these reasons, I can only study by snatches: still, however, I *do* study occasionally, and both compose and read by turns; but my reading teaches me, by a very mortifying comparison, with what ill success I attempt to be an author myself. Though indeed you give me great encouragement, when you compare the piece I wrote in vindication of Helvidius, to the oration of Demosthenes against Midias. I confess I had that

harangue in my view; not that I was so vain and absurd as to pretend to rival it, but I endeavoured at least to imitate it, as far as the difference of our subjects would admit, and as nearly as a genius of the lowest rank can copy one of the highest. Farewell.

LETTER XXXI.

TO CORNUTUS.

CLAUDIUS POLLIO is extremely desirous of your friendship; and he deserves it, not only because he *desires* it, but because he offers you *his* in return: as, indeed, few ever request the one, without being disposed to give the other. He is an upright, honest, good-natured man, and modest, I had almost said, beyond measure; if, indeed, that virtue can be carried to excess. We served in the army together, when he commanded a troop of horse; and I had an opportunity of taking a nearer view of his character, than merely what his being my fellow-officer gave me. I was appointed by the lieutenant-general to examine the accounts of the several companies; and as I discovered many instances of gross avarice and neglect of duty in some, so I found the highest integrity and exactest care in Pollio. He was afterwards promoted to very considerable employments in the revenue; yet no temptations could corrupt the innate integrity of his soul, and no prosperity swell his breast with pride, but he preserved, in all the variety of posts through which he passed, his honour and his

humanity unimpeached; to which I will add, he supported the fatigues of business with the same firmness of mind he now discovers in his retreat. He once, indeed, quitted his retirement for a short time, greatly to his credit; being called forth by my worthy friend Corellius to his assistance, in purchasing and dividing those lands which were given to the public by the liberality of the emperor Nerva.* And could there be any circumstance more to his honour, than to be thus particularly singled out as his coadjutor, by a person of so eminent a character as Corellius? You may judge how faithfully he reveres the sacred ties of friendship by the last wills† of several of his friends, particularly that of Musonius Bassus, a man of distinguished merit. Pollio (for he cultivates polite literature, as well as every other valuable qualification) has very gratefully endeavoured to perpetuate and extend the memory of Bassus, by publishing an acccount of his life; a circumstance too uncommon and too generous, not to be particularly applauded; since the generality of the world seldom mention the dead, unless to complain of them.‡

* Nerva restored to the Romans all that Domitian had plundered them of; and gave a very large sum of money to be laid out in the purchase of lands for the support of decayed families.

† See Letter XX. of this book, note.

‡ Pliny seems to allude to the *Captatores*, or legacy hunters: a contemptible character, extremely common among the Romans in the decline of their state, when the prevailing luxury of the times rendered too many of them, in order to supply their extravagance, capable of any meanness to obtain a pecuniary remembrance in the wills of their wealthy acquaintance, and too much mortified not to complain when they found themselves disappointed.

Receive, then, this worthy man, greatly desirous, believe me, of your amity, with warm embraces, and even invite him to accept of it as what you owe him; for, he who makes the first advances towards friendship, cannot so properly be said to solicit as to claim a return. Farewell.

LETTER XXXII.

TO FABATUS.*

I REJOICE that the arrival of my friend Tiro was acceptable to you; but particularly, that you made use, as your letter informs me, of the opportunity which the presence of the proconsul afforded you, of manumizing† several of your slaves. For, as I wish to see our corporation‡ improved by every possible means, so particularly by an increase of citizens, as that, of all others, is the strongest ornament a community can receive. I am pleased, too, (not out of a spirit of vanity, however I confess I am pleased) with what you add, that both you and I were highly complimented in the acknowledgments which were made upon this occasion; for, as Xenophon observes, *the voice of praise is sweet;* especially when we think we deserve it. Farewell.

* His wife Calphurnia's grandfather.

† See Letter XVI. of this book.

‡ Comum.

LETTER XXXIII.

TO TACITUS.

I STRONGLY presage, (and I am persuaded I shall not be deceived) that your histories will be immortal. I ingenuously own, therefore,* I so much the more earnestly wish to find a place in

* As some ingenious writers have affected to draw a comparison between our author and Cicero, to the disadvantage of the former; it will not, it is hoped, be thought any want of reverence to a character, which deserves the highest veneration from every admirer of the fine arts, to set before the reader an instance, where Pliny greatly outshines that noble example, he was upon all occasions so desirous of copying. There is a letter of Cicero extant for the same purpose as this of Pliny's, addressed to his friend Lucceius, (*Ep. Fam.* l. 5. 12.) who was writing the history of his own times. The sensible Montaign condemns *both*, as instances of immoderate ambition; and observes, (Tom. I. 329.) that "Fortune, as it were in pure spite, has taken care to hand down to us the vanity of these requests, while she has long since destroyed the histories they solicited." Let it be remarked, however, in justice to our author, that, upon a comparison of the two letters, the ambition of Pliny will appear far more reasonable than that of Cicero; for the latter does not scruple to press his friend to transgress the rules of history, and break through the bounds of truth, in his favour. "*Te plane etiam atque etiam rogo, ut et ornas ea vehementius etium quam fortasse sentis, et in ea leges historiæ negligas, amorique nostro plusculum etiam quam concedit veritas largire:*" whereas Pliny, with a far nobler spirit, expressly declares he does not desire Tacitus to heighten the fact, and that actions of real worth need only to be set in their true light. In Cicero's letter, we read the extravagant dictates of the most immoderate ambition; and he himself confesses he had not the assurance to look his friend in the face while he expressed them: "*Coram me tecum eadem hæc agere sæpe conantem deteruit pudor:*" in Pliny's, we see nothing but what is agreeable to cool sense, and the honest ambition of one who was conscious he had acted well, and desirous posterity should know it.

them. If we are generally careful to have our persons represented by the best artists, ought we not to desire that our actions may be related and celebrated by an author of your distinguished abilities? In view to this, I acquaint you with the following affair, which, though it cannot have escaped your attention, as it is mentioned in the public journals,* still I acquaint you with it, that you may be the more sensible how agreeable it will be to me, that this action, greatly heightened by the hazard which attended it, should receive an additional lustre from the testimony of so bright a genius. The senate appointed Herennius Senecio, and myself, counsel for the province of Bœtica, in their impeachment of Bœbius Massa. He was condemned, and the house ordered his ef-

* Whether Pliny means by the *Publica acta*, the journal of the senate, or what Tacitus (Annal. 30, 31.) and Suetonius (In J. Cæsar, 20.) call the *Diurna acta*, may admit of a doubt. The former seems to have been exactly in the nature of our votes of the house of commons, wherein a short account was given to the public of what passed in the senate; the latter appears very much to resemble our Gazette, being an authorized narrative of the transactions worthy of notice which happened in Rome. Petronius has given us the form of the latter of these, in his account of Trimalchio; and as it may not, perhaps, be unentertaining to the English reader, to see how exactly a Roman newspaper runs in the style of a modern one, the following is an article or two out of it:

"On the 26th of July, 30 boys and 40 girls were born at Trimalchio's estate at Cumæ."

"At the same time, a slave was put to death for uttering disrespectful words against his lord."

"The same day, a fire broke out in Pompey's gardens, which began in the night, in the steward's apartment."—PETRON. *Satyr*, p. 196. Ed. Var.

fects to be seized into the hands of the public officer. Shortly after, Senecio having learnt that the consuls intended to sit to hear petitions, came to me, and proposed that we should go together, and address them with the same unanimity we executed the office which had been enjoined us, that they would not suffer Massa's effects to be dissipated by those who were appointed to preserve them. I answered that as we had been counsel in this cause by order of the senate, I would recommend it to his consideration, whether it would be proper for us, after sentence had passed, to interpose any farther? "You are at liberty," said he, "to prescribe what bounds you please to yourself, who have no particular connections with the province, except what result from your late services to them; but they have a much stronger claim upon me, who was born there, and enjoyed the post of quæstor among them." If such, I replied, was his determined resolution, I was ready to attend him, that, whatever resentment should be the consequence, it might not fall singly upon himself.—Accordingly, we went to the consuls, where Senecio declared what he thought proper upon the occasion; to which I subjoined a few words on my part. We had scarcely ended, when Massa, complaining that Senecio had not acted against him with the fidelity of an advocate, but the bitterness of an enemy, desired he might be at liberty to prosecute him for treason.* The whole assembly

* The reader will undoubtedly be surprised to find a prosecution of *treason*, founded merely upon a suggestion of misconduct in the management of a private trial. But this difficulty will be

was struck with the utmost consternation and horror at this motion. I immediately rose up: "Most

cleared, perhaps, by considering the character of Domitian, in whose reign this transaction happened. To show any dislike to those who were the favourites of that infamous emperor, was construed by him into an act of treason against himself. He could gather that poisonous weed, (as our author in his panegyric strongly expresses it,) even from the barren sands of the theatre; (*crimina majestatis in arena colligebat,*) for, not to admire even his gladiators, was deemed, in those wretched times, an act of disloyalty. If, therefore, Massa was in the good graces of Domitian, it would have been very easy for the former, to strain the honest zeal which Senecio had shown in conducting this cause into an instance of disrespect to the emperor. And the character which Tacitus gives of this Massa strongly supports that supposition; for he describes him as the bane of every good man, and an instrument of those calamities which the Romans suffered under Domitian; "*optimo cuique exitiosus,*" says he, "*et in causas malorum quæ tulimus.*"—TACIT. *Hist.* lib. iv. 50. It must be owned, however, that the expression in the original (*postulatio impietatis*) does not so absolutely and necessarily imply a prosecution of treason, but that it may admit of another interpretation. Accordingly, a gentleman of distinguished learning, who favoured the translator with his sentiments upon this passage, has offered a conjecture much too ingenious to be suppressed. "It was the practice (he observes) of the ancients, that all deposits, trusts, sequestrations, wills, &c. should be lodged in the most secure and unsuspected places: accordingly, they chose their temples for that purpose, and the priests were of course the legal sequestrators.

Nos ibi apud Theotimum omne aurum deposuimus,
Qui illic sacerdos est in Dianæ Ephesiæ.

PLAUT. *Bacch.*

"And of this the classic and civil law books furnish abundant proof." He thinks, therefore, that an insinuation, that *Massa* had been tampering with the church to betray this *fidei-commissum*, and that the security became suspicious, might *possibly* carry an action of *impiety*. However, upon a closer examination of the letter, and comparing it with the history of that age, the interpretation adopted in the text may, perhaps, be justified.

noble consuls," said I, "I am afraid it should seem that Massa has tacitly charged me with having favoured him in this cause, since he did not think proper to join me with Senecio in the desired prosecution." This short speech was extremely well received by those who were present; as it soon afterwards got abroad, and was publicly mentioned with general applause. The late emperor Nerva, (who, though at that time in a private station, yet interested himself in every meritorious action which concerned the public,) wrote an admirable letter to me upon the occasion, wherein he not only congratulated me, but the age, which had produced an example so much in the spirit (as he was pleased to call it) of better days. But, whatever the fact be, it is in your power to heighten and spread the lustre of it; though far am I from desiring you would in the least exceed the bounds of reality. History ought to be guided by strict truth, and worthy actions require nothing more. Farewell.

THE LETTERS OF PLINY.

BOOK EIGHTH.

LETTER I.

TO SEPTITIUS.

I HAD a good journey hither, excepting only that some of my servants have suffered in their health by the violent heats. Poor Encolpius, my reader,* whose assistance is of such service to me, both in my studies and amusements, was so affected by the dust, that it occasioned his spitting of blood; an accident which will prove not less unfortunate to me, than to himself, should he be thereby rendered unfit for those purposes of literature in which he so greatly excels. If that should unhappily be the event, where shall I find one who will read my compositions with so much spirit, and so captivating an elocution, or admire them with so much feeling? But the gods seem to favour our better hopes, as his bleeding is stopped, and his pain abated. He is extremely temperate on *his* part; and no attention is wanting on mine, nor any care on his physician's. These considerations, together with the sa-

* Persons of rank and literature, among the Romans, retained in their families a domestic, whose principal business was to read to them.

lubrity of this air, and the quiet of retirement, give us reason to expect, that the country will contribute as much to the restoration of his health, as to his repose. Farewell.

LETTER II.

TO CALVISIUS.

OTHER people visit their estates in order to recruit their purses, but I go to mine only to return so much the poorer. I had sold my vintage to the merchants, who were extremely eager to purchase it, encouraged by the price it then bore, and what it was probable it would rise to; however, they were disappointed in their expectations. Upon this occasion, to have made one general undistinguished abatement to all, would have been much the easiest, but not the most equitable method. I hold it particularly worthy of a man of honour, to be governed by the principles of strict equity in his domestic as well as public conduct; in small, as in great affairs; in his own concerns, as well as in those of others: and if every deviation from rectitude is equally criminal,* every approach to it must be equally laudable. In the first place, then, I remitted to all in general one-eighth part of the price they had agreed to give me, that none might go away without a mark of my liberality; in the *next*, I particularly considered those, who having advanced to me large sums in part of payment, had *done*

* It was a doctrine maintained by the Stoics, that all crimes are equal.

me so much the more service, and had been the greater sufferers themselves. To those, therefore, whose purchase amounted to more than ten thousand sesterces,* I returned (beside that which I may call the general and common eighth) a tenth-part of what they had paid above that sum. I fear I do not express myself with sufficient clearness; I will endeavour to explain my meaning: for instance, suppose a man had purchased of me to the value of fifteen thousand sesterces,† I remitted to him one-eighth part of that whole sum, and likewise one-tenth of five thousand.‡ Besides this, as several had deposited, in different proportions, part of the price they had agreed to pay, whilst others had advanced nothing; I thought it would not be agreeable to equity, that all these should be favoured with the same equal remission. To those, therefore, who had made any payments, I returned a tenth-part upon the sums so paid. By these means, I made a proper acknowledgment to each, according to their respective deserts; and likewise encouraged them, not only to deal with me for the future, but to be prompt in their payments. This instance of my good nature, or my judgment, (call it which you please,) was a very considerable expence to me. However, I found my account in it; for all the country greatly commended both the singular generosity of these abatements, and the principle by which I regulated them. Even those to whom

* About L.80 of our money.

† About L.120 of our money.

‡ About L.40 sterling.

I did not "mete (as the proverb is) by the same measure," but adjusted the remission to the sum they had advanced, held themselves obliged to me, in proportion to the probity of their principles; and went away pleased with having experienced, that not from me

The good and bad an equal boon receive.*

Farewell.

LETTER III.

TO SPARSUS.

YOU tell me, that, of all my works, the last I sent you is your greatest favourite. The same judgment has likewise been passed upon it by another of my very knowing and ingenious friends; and I am the more inclined to believe that neither of you is mistaken, not only as it is improbable you both should, but because I am much disposed to flatter myself. I always endeavour, indeed, that my last performance may appear the most finished; and for that reason I prefer the speech I lately published, to that which you mention: I will send it you as soon as I can meet with a safe conveyance. And now I have raised your expectations of this piece, I doubt you will be disappointed when it comes to your hands. In the mean while, however, you may indulge the agreeable persuasion, (and perhaps, too, without being disappointed,) that it is a composition you will read with pleasure. Farewell.

* Hom. Iliad, lib. ix. v. 319.

LETTER IV.

TO CANINIUS.

I GREATLY approve your design of writing a poem upon the Dacian war;* for where could you have chosen a recent subject so full of events, so extensive, or indeed so capable of poetical ornament?—a subject which, while it has all the marvellous of fiction, has all the recommendation of truth. You will sing of rivers taught to flow in new channels; of bridges† thrown over immense rivers;

* Dacia comprehended part of the present kingdom of Hungary, together with part of Transylvania, Servia, Walachia, and Moldavia. It was first subdued and added to the Roman empire by Trajan; in memory of whose victories over this nation, the famous pillar is supposed to have been erected, called *Trajan's Pillar*, which is still to be seen entire at Rome. It is 128 Italian feet high, to the top of which you ascend by 184 steps, which wind round the inside. The outside is carved in basso relievo, with the representation of the most remarkable circumstances of this expedition. (*Bartoli colonna Traj.*) After the death of Trajan, his ashes were placed, as some authors say, in a golden ball on the top of this noble pillar; but Eutropius affirms they were deposited under it.—*Eutrop.* lib. viii. cap. 5.

† It is probable, Pliny here alludes to the famous bridge built by Trajan over the river Danube, in the upper Mœsia, that *last flight*, as Sir William Temple calls it, *of ancient architecture*. "It is styled, by the ancients, the most stately fabric of that nature in the universe. It was all of square stone; and contained 20 arches, each of them 120 feet above the foundation, and 60 feet in breadth, all distinct from each other 170 feet. It was built where the river was narrowest, and, consequently, where the stream was strongest and most rapid; which renders the fabric still more stupendous, on account of the almost insurmountable difficulties they must have met with in lying so large a foundation. The architect employed

of encampments upon the dreadful precipices of craggy mountains; and of a brave prince,* who, though driven from his palace, preserved his courage unsubdued to the last moment of his life. You will describe, too, the glorious victor's double triumph, one of which was the first that was ever gained over that nation, till *then* invincible, as the other will be the last. There is one difficulty, however, and a very considerable one it is, where to find expressions equal to the subject; a difficulty which seems almost insuperable even by your elevated genius, though capable of rising to the most sublime topics. Some difficulty, too, you will find in reconciling those barbarous and uncouth names, especially that of the king† himself, to the harmony of Grecian numbers. There is nothing, however, so hard, that art and industry cannot mitigate at least, if not absolutely subdue. If Homer is allowed to contract or lengthen, or change even Grecian

upon this occasion, was one Apollodorus of Damascus, who, it seems, left a description of this great work. We are told, that some remains are still to be seen of it near Zeveria, in Lower Hungary. Adrian, fearing the Barbarians might make use of it to invade the Roman territories, broke down the arches; but the piers were still standing in Dion Cassius's time, that is, 190 years after, though they served only to show, says the writer, the utmost extent of human power. This stupendous fabric was begun and ended in a summer."—*Univ. Hist.* vol. vi. p. 14.

* Decebalus, king of the Dacians; who, rather than fall into the hands of the conqueror, or live in dependence, put an end to his own life.

† From hence Catanæus conjectures, upon the credit of Orosius, that the true name of the king was *Diurpaneus*, which was afterwards changed, by the Greek and Latin writers, to Decebalus.

names, which are nothing harsh to the ear, in order to make them run more smoothly in his verse, why should the same liberty be refused to you, especially since it is necessity, and not affectation, that pleads for the indulgence? Come on, then, my friend; and after having, as poets are wont, invoked the gods, and, among the rest, that divine hero,* whose mighty deeds and deep counsels you are going to celebrate, loosen all your cordage, spread every sail, and then, if ever, launch forth with the full flow of your unbounded genius;—for you must allow me to be poetical, when I am talking to a poet. And now I insist that you send me every part, as soon as it shall have received your last finishing touches, and even before, while it is only a rough sketch, and unformed embryo. You will tell me, that a detached portion cannot please, like one entire piece; nor an unfinished plan be as satisfactory as a complete work. I am sensible it cannot, and therefore shall consider it only as in its first rudiments; as a separate and disjoined member; and shall lay it up in my scrutoire, to wait your last hand. Indulge me, then, with this very singular instance of your affection, and suffer me to be privy to what you would chuse to conceal even from every other person. In a word, though the more time and caution you take in communicating your work to the public, the more, possibly, it may heighten my esteem and approbation of the poet; yet the sooner, and with the less scruple, you send it to me, the more I shall love and applaud the friend. Farewell.

* Trajan.

LETTER V.

TO GEMINIUS.

OUR friend Macrinus has received a most severe wound: he has lost his wife! a lady whose exemplary virtues would have rendered her an ornament even to former times. He lived with her thirty-nine years in the most uninterrupted harmony. How respectful was her behaviour to him! and how well did she herself deserve the highest respect! In her character were united all those amiable virtues that adorn and distinguish the different periods of female life! It should surely afford great consolation to Macrinus, that he has thus long enjoyed so exquisite a blessing. But that reflection seems only so much the more to embitter his loss; as indeed the pain of parting with our happiness still rises in proportion to the length of its continuance. I cannot therefore but be greatly anxious for so valuable a friend, till this deep wound to his peace shall be in a state to admit of proper applications. Time, however, together with a satiety of grief itself, will best, and indeed necessarily, effect his cure. Farewell.

LETTER VI.

TO MONTANUS.

MY last letter has by this time, I suppose, informed you, that I observed lately, upon a monument erected to the memory of Pallas, the following

inscription : "The senate* decreed to him, as a reward for his fidelity and affection to his patrons, the honour of the Prætorian ornaments, together with the sum of fifteen millions of sesterces ; but he was contented with accepting only the honour." I afterwards thought it worth while to search for the original record, and it run in a strain so very extravagant, that this proud inscription seems modest and humble compared with the terms of the decree. The eulogiums which have been given to the most illustrious Romans, I do not say those of more remote antiquity, as the Scipios and the Mummii ; but (to come nearer our own times) the Marii, the Syllas, and the Pompeys, fall infinitely short of those which have been lavished upon this man. Was it a spirit of banter, shall I suppose, or a principle of slavery, that produced this decree ? I would ascribe it to the former, were not raillery unbecoming the dignity of the senate. Must it be attributed, then, to the most abject subjection ? Yet who is so wretchedly sunk as to be capable of such meanness ! Or was it the lust of ambition that gave birth to this decree ; and the mover of it in the senate proposed it, perhaps, with a view of paving the way to his own preferment ? But whom can we suppose so irrational, as to desire to raise himself at the expence both of his own and the public honour, in a commonwealth, where the only means to be first in rank was to be first in flattering Pallas ? Not to mention their offering to a slave the Prætorian honours, they were slaves

* See Book VII. letter 29th, and the notes there.

themselves who made the offer: not to animadvert upon that part of their decree, which says, that Pallas ought not only to be entreated, but compelled, to wear the golden* ring; no doubt it was not consistent with the dignity of the senate, that a person of Prætorian rank should wear an iron one: to pass over, I say, these less flagrant instances; mark, I beseech you, the following very extraordinary clause: "The senate, (and was it not expiated in form after so vile a pollution?) the senate returns thanks to Claudius, not only for the honourable mention he himself was pleased to make of Pallas, but for the opportunity afforded the house also of testifying their benevolence towards him." It was highly to the credit, no doubt, of the senate, not to appear deficient in point of gratitude to Pallas! It goes on: "That Pallas, to whom every man acknowledges his obligations in the best manner he is able, may receive the just reward of his fidelity and singular services." Would one not imagine, that he had extended the bounds of the empire, or, at least, rescued the armies of the state? But it proceeds: "Since no occasion more agreeable could present itself to the senate and the Roman people, of exercising their liberality, than an opportunity of rewarding one, who had proved himself so honest and disinterested a guardian of the emperor's finances." Such was the glorious ambition of the senate at that time; such the highest pleasure of the people; such the most agreeable occasion of exercising their liberality; to have an opportunity of exhausting the

* None but knights and senators had the privilege of wearing a gold ring; as an iron one was a badge of servitude.

public treasures upon Pallas!—It continues: "The senate, therefore, voted, that fifteen millions of sesterces should be paid to him out of the treasury; and, as he has a soul far above desires of this kind, that the emperor should be so much the more strongly entreated, to use his authority with Pallas, to oblige him to comply with the inclination of the senate." Nothing more indeed seemed wanting to complete this extravagant scene, than that the imperial authority should interpose; that Pallas should be pressed to yield to the desires of the senate; that Cæsar himself should be called upon to assist the house in opposing this insolent piece of self-denial, lest the humble Pallas should refuse fifteen millions of sesterces! He refused, nevertheless, the offer the public made him of this immense sum; the only thing he could possibly have done more arrogant than the accepting of it. Yet even this the senate applauded, and seem to lament in the following clause: "But whereas, our excellent prince, and father of his country, has, at the instance of Pallas, expressed his desire, to have that part of the vote withdrawn which relates to the giving him fifteen millions of sesterces out of the treasury; the senate declares, that it was with much willingness, and great justice, they voted, among other honours, the said intended sum to Pallas, upon account of his fidelity and vigilance; however, in compliance with the emperor's desire, which they think cannot, without impiety, be opposed in any instance, they obey it even in the present."—Figure to yourself, Pallas entering his protest, as it were, against the decree of the senate; moderating the honours which

were offered him, and refusing, as something much more valuable, the fifteen millions, when at the same time he accepted the Prætorian ornaments, as a present of an inferior nature. Represent to yourself, Cæsar yielding to the entreaties of his freed-man in the face of the senate, or rather, indeed, obeying his commands; for, in the present instance, to *entreat* was to *command!* Think of the senate declaring, in every clause of this decree, that it was with great willingness and justice the house intended, among other honours, to present Pallas with this sum; and that it would have insisted upon his acceptance, but in compliance with the will of the emperor, which it was impious in any point to oppose! Was it owing then only to the obsequiousness of the senate, and the modesty of Pallas, that *he did* not receive fifteen millions out of the treasury? And was it in this instance, of all others, that they would have made an exception to their obedience, if they had thought it right to have done so in any? And now, after all this, you will imagine, perhaps, that you are come to the end. Have patience, however, there is still something more remarkable to follow: "And whereas it is highly expedient, that the generous disposition of the emperor, to approve and reward merit, should be every where made known and celebrated, especially in such places where those who have the care and administration of his affairs may be excited to an imitation; and whereas the approved fidelity and integrity of Pallas may stimulate others to emulate so *laudable* an example,—It is, therefore, resolved, that the memorial which the emperor read to the senate, *on*

the 28th of January last, together with the decree of the senate thereupon, shall be engraven in tablets of brass, and hung up near the martial statue of Julius Cæsar."* It was not, it seems, sufficient, that the senate alone should be witness to this complicated disgrace; but the most frequented place in all Rome was chosen, in order to display it to the then present and future times: It was decreed, that all the honours of a most insolent slave, both those which he refused, and those which (as much as in the authors of the decree lay) he had borne, should be inscribed in brass; the Prætorian distinctions decreed to Pallas inscribed, like ancient treaties or sacred laws, upon public and everlasting monuments of brass! So great was their—I know not what epithet to give it—that the emperor chose to display his weakness, the senate their meanness, and Pallas his insolence, in the face of all the world! The senate was not ashamed to colour this turpitude with a show of reason; and a noble one, in truth, it was, even "that others might be encouraged, by the rewards conferred upon Pallas, to a laudable emulation of his conduct!" Thus contemptible were all honours rendered, even those which the *noble* Pallas did not disdain to accept! And yet there were found persons of rank and birth so humble, as to desire and solicit those very honours, which they saw thus offered by slaves, and conferred upon a freed-man. Happy for me, that I was not born in those days, which I cannot help blushing for, as if I had actually lived in them; and, I doubt not, they raise the same sentiments in

* In the forum.

you. I know the honest feeling of your temper, and am persuaded, that if I have been transported into a greater warmth of expression than is suitable, perhaps, to a private letter, you will think I have shown rather too little, than too much indignation. Farewell.

LETTER VII.

TO TACITUS.

WHEN you sent me your treatise, it was *not* (as you were pleased to say yourself) as one master, or disciple, would communicate his works to another, but with the condescension of a preceptor to his scholar; for in that relation I must consider myself in respect to you. Accordingly, you summon me to my studies, whilst I am playing the truant, and prolonging the Saturnalian holidays.* Tell me now, could I have made you a more stiff and awkward compliment, or given a stronger proof, that I am so far from deserving to be your instructor, that I am not even worthy to be your *pupil*? However, I will venture to assume the character you have invested me with, and exert the authority you have given me over your book: and with so much the more freedom, as I have nothing *of* my own to send you, upon which you may take your revenge. Farewell.

* Vol. I. Book II. Let. 17, note.

LETTER VIII.

TO ROMANUS.

HAVE you ever seen the source of the river Clitumnus?* as I never heard you mention it, I imagine not; let me therefore advise you to visit it immediately. It is but lately indeed I had that pleasure, and I condemn myself for not having viewed it sooner. At the foot of a little hill, covered with venerable and shady cypress trees, a spring issues, which, gushing out in different and unequal streams, forms itself, after several windings, into a spacious bason, so extremely clear, that you may see the pebbles, and the little pieces of money which are† thrown into it, as they lie

* Now called Clitumno: it rises a little below the village of Campello in Ombria. The inhabitants near this river still retain a notion, that its waters are attended with a supernatural property, imagining it makes the cattle white that drink of it; a quality for which it is likewise celebrated by many of the Latin poets. See ADDISON'S *Travels.*

† The heads of considerable rivers, hot springs, large bodies of standing water, &c. were esteemed holy among the Romans, and cultivated with religious ceremonies. *Magnorum fluminum* (says Seneca) *capita reveremur; subita et ex abdito vasti amnis eruptio aras habet; coluntur aquarum calentium fontes, et stagna quædam, vel opacitas, vel immensa altitudo sacravit.* Ep. 41. It was customary to throw little pieces of money into those fountains, lakes, &c. which had the reputation of being sacred, as a mark of veneration for those places, and to render the presiding deities propitious. Suetonius mentions this practice, in the annual vows which he says the Roman people made for the health of Augustus. *Suet. in vit. Aug.*

at the bottom. From thence it is carried off, not so much by the declivity of the ground, as by its own weight and exuberance. It is navigable almost as soon as it has quitted its source, and wide enough to admit a free passage for vessels to pass each other, as they sail with or against the stream. The current runs so strong, though the ground is level, that the large barges which go down the river have no occasion to make use of their oars; while those which ascend, find it difficult to advance, even with the assistance of oars and poles: and this vicissitude of labour and ease is exceedingly amusing, when one sails up and down merely for pleasure. The banks on each side are shaded with great numbers of verdant ash and poplar trees, as distinctly reflected in the stream, as if they were actually existing in it. The water is cold as snow, and as lucid too. Near it stands an ancient and venerable temple, wherein is placed a statue representing the river-god Clitumnus in his proper vestment; and, indeed, the prophetic oracles, here delivered, sufficiently testify the immediate presence of that divinity. Several little chapels are scattered round, dedicated to particular gods, distinguished by different names, and some of them too presiding over different fountains. For, besides the principal spring, which is, as it were, the parent of all the rest, there are several smaller streams, which, taking their rise from various sources, lose themselves in the river; over which a bridge is thrown, that separates the sacred part from that which lies open to common use. Vessels are allowed to come above this bridge, but no per-

son is permitted to swim,* except below it. The Hispellates,† to whom Augustus gave this place, furnish a public bath, and likewise entertain all strangers at their own expence. Several villas, attracted by the beauty of this river, are situated upon its borders. In short, every surrounding object will afford you entertainment. You may also amuse yourself with numberless inscriptions, fixed upon the pillars and walls by different persons, celebrating the virtues of the fountain, and the divinity who presides over it. There are many of them you will greatly admire, as there are some that will make you laugh: but I must correct myself when I say so; you are too humane, I know, to laugh upon such an occasion. Farewell.

LETTER IX.

TO URSUS.

IT is long since I have taken either a book, or a pencil, in my hand; since I have known the sweets of leisure and repose; since I have known, in short, that indolent, but agreeable satisfaction of doing nothing, and being nothing; so much have the affairs of my friends engaged me, and prevented me from enjoying the pleasures of retirement and contemplation. There is no sort of philosophical studies, however, sufficiently important to su-

* The touch of a naked body was thought to pollute these consecrated waters, as appears from a passage in Tacitus, l. 14. Ann. c. 22.

† Inhabitants of a town in Ombria, now called Spello.

persede the offices of friendship; for they are offices which philosophy herself teaches us most religiously to discharge. Farewell.

LETTER X.

TO FABATUS.*

YOUR concern to hear of my wife's miscarriage, will be equal, I know, to the earnest desire you have that we should make you a great-grandfather. The inexperience of her youth rendered her ignorant that she was breeding; so that she not only neglected the proper precautions, but managed herself in a way extremely unsuitable to a person in her circumstances. But she has severely atoned for her mistake, by the utmost hazard of her life. Though you certainly will be afflicted to see yourself thus disappointed, in your advanced age, of the immediate hopes of leaving a family behind you; yet it deserves your gratitude to the Gods, that, in the preservation of your grand-daughter, you have still reason to expect that blessing: an expectation so much the more assured, as she has given this proof, though an unhappy one indeed, of her being capable of bearing children. These, at least, are reflections by which I endeavour to confirm my own hopes, and console myself under my present disappointment. You cannot more ardently *desire* to have great-grand-children, than I to have children; as the dignity of both our families seems *to*

* His wife's grandfather.

open to them a sure road to honours, and they will inherit the glory of descending from a long race of ancestors, whose fame is as extensive as their nobility is ancient. May we but have the pleasure of seeing them born, it will make us amends for the present mortification! Farewell.

LETTER XI.

TO HISPULLA.*

WHEN I consider, that you love your niece even more fondly than if she were your own daughter, I ought, in the first place, to inform you of her recovery, before I tell you she has been ill; that the sentiments of joy at the one, may leave you no leisure to be afflicted at the other. Though I fear, indeed, after your first transports of gratulation are over, you will feel some concern; and, in the midst of your joy for the danger she has escaped, will tremble at the thought of that which she has undergone. She is now, however, in good spirits, and again restored to herself and to me; and is recovering her strength and health, as fast as she lost them. To say the truth, (and I may now safely tell it you,) her life was in the utmost danger; not indeed from any fault of her own, but a little from the inexperience of her youth. To this must be imputed the cause of her miscarriage, and the sad experience she has had of the consequence of not knowing she was breeding. But though this mis-

* His wife's aunt.

fortune has deprived you at present of a nephew, or a niece, to console you for the loss of your brother, you should reflect, that it is a blessing which seems rather to be deferred than denied, since *her* life is preserved from whom that happiness is to be expected. I entreat you then to represent this accident to your father* in the most favourable light; as your sex are the best advocates in cases of this kind. Farewell.

LETTER XII.

TO MINUTIANUS.

I BEG you to excuse me this one day: Titinius Capito is to recite a performance of his, and I know not whether it is most my inclination, or my duty, to attend him. He is a man of a most amiable disposition, and justly to be numbered among the brightest ornaments of the present age. He diligently cultivates the polite arts himself, and generously admires and encourages them in others; to many of whom he is the protector, the refuge, and the liberal patron; as he is to all of them a bright and exemplary model. In a word, he is the restorer and reformer of literature, now, alas! well nigh sinking into total neglect and decay. His house is open to every man of genius, who has any works to rehearse; and it is not *there* alone that he attends these assemblies with the most obliging good-nature. I am sure, at least, he never once ex-

* Fabatus, grandfather to Calphurnia, Pliny's wife.

cused himself from mine, if he happened to be at Rome. I should, therefore, with a more than ordinary ill grace, refuse to return him the same favour, especially upon so honourable an occasion. Should not I think myself obliged to a man, who, if I were engaged in any law-suit, generously attended the cause in which I was interested? And am I less indebted, now that my whole care and business is of the literary kind, for his assiduity in my concerns of this sort; which, if not the only, is however the principal instance, wherein I can be obliged? But though I owed him no return of this nature; though I were not engaged to him by the reciprocal tie of the same good offices he has done me; yet not only the powers of his extensive genius, as elegantly polished as it is severely correct, but the dignity of his subject, would strongly incite me to be of his audience. He has written an account of the deaths of several illustrious persons, some of whom were my particular friends. It is a pious office then, it should seem, as I could not be present at their obsequies, to attend, at least, this (as I may call it) their funeral oration; which, though a late, is however, for that very reason, a more unsuspected tribute to their memories. Farewell.

LETTER XIII.

TO GENIALIS.

I MUCH approve of your having read my orations with your father. It is highly for your advantage to learn from a man of his eloquence, what

to admire in compositions of this kind, and what to condemn; as you will at the same time be trained up in an habitual custom of speaking your real sentiments. You see whose steps it is you ought to follow; and happy are you in having a living example before you, which is at once the nearest and the noblest model you can pursue! in a word, that he whom nature designed you should most resemble, is, of all others, the person whom you should most endeavour to imitate. Farewell.

LETTER XIV.

TO ARISTO.

AS you are no less acquainted with the political law of your country, (which includes the customs and usages of the senate,) than with the civil, I am particularly desirous to have your opinion, whether I was mistaken in an affair which lately came before the house. This I request, not with a view of being directed in my judgment as to what is passed, (for that is now too late) but in order to know how to conduct myself, if any case of the same nature should hereafter happen to arise. You will ask, perhaps, why I apply to you for information concerning a point, wherein I ought to be well instructed? But the tyranny of former reigns,* as it introduced a neglect and ignorance of all other parts of useful knowledge, so particularly of what relates to the customs of the senate; for who is there

* Those of Nero and Domitian.

so idly industrious as to endeavour to learn, what he never can have an opportunity of practising? Besides, it is not very easy to retain even the knowledge one has acquired, where no occasion of exercising it occurs. Hence it was, that Liberty, at her return,* found us totally ignorant and inexperienced in what relates to her interest; and thus, in our eagerness to taste her sweets, we are sometimes hurried on to action, ere we are well informed in what manner it is proper we should act. But it was wisely provided by the institution of our ancestors, that the young men should learn from the old, not only by precept, but by their own observation, how to behave in that sphere, wherein they were one day themselves to move; as these, in their turn, transmitted the same mode of instruction to their children. Upon this principle it was, that the youth were sent early into the army, that, by being taught to obey, they might learn to command, and, whilst they followed others, might be trained by degrees to become leaders themselves. And thus, when they were candidates for any office, they were obliged to stand at the entrance of the senate, that they might be spectators before they were admitted parties in the public council of the empire. The father of each youth was his instructor upon these occasions; or, if he were dead, some person of years and dignity supplied the place of a father. Accordingly, they were taught by that surest method of discipline, example, how far the right of proposing any law to the senate extended; what privi-

* When Nerva and Trajan received the empire.

leges a senator had in delivering his opinion in the house; the power of the magistrates in that assembly, and the rights of the rest of the members; where it is proper to yield, and where to insist; when and how long to speak, and when to be silent; how to distinguish and separate complicated and inconsistent propositions,* and how to improve upon another member's motion; in a word, they learnt by this means whatever relates to the conduct of a senator in the house. As for myself, it is true, I served in the army when I was a youth; but it was at a time when courage was suspected, and want of spirit honoured; when generals were without authority, and soldiers without modesty; when there were neither discipline nor obedience in the camp, but all was riot, disorder, and confusion; in short, when it was happier to forget, than to remember what one learnt. I attended, likewise, in my youth, the senate, but a senate that was mute and dispirited; where it was dangerous to speak one's sentiments, and infamous to be silent. What satisfaction in learning, or indeed what could be learnt, when the senate sate in the utmost indolence, or acted with the highest infamy; when they were convened either for cruel or ridiculous purposes;† and when their deliberations were nev-

* If any opinion proposed to the senate was thought too general, and to include several distinct articles, some of which might be approved, and others rejected, it was usual to require that it might be divided: and this they sometimes did by a general voice of the assembly, crying out, *divide, divide!* Middlet. Treat. on the Roman Senate, 137.

† The fourth satire of Juvenal will serve as a comment upon this passage, where he acquaints us, that a turbot of a most enor-

er serious, though often sad! But I was not only a witness to this scene of wretchedness, as a spectator; I bore my share of it too as a senator, and both saw and suffered under it for many years; which so broke and damped my spirits, that they have not even yet been able fully to recover themselves. It is but within a short time (for all time seems short in proportion to its happiness) since we could take any pleasure in knowing what relates to, or in exercising the duties of, our station. Upon these considerations, therefore, I may reasonably entreat you, in the first place, to pardon my error, (if I have committed one,) and in the next, to lead me out of it by your superior knowledge; for, I am sensible you have ever been diligent to enquire into the constitution of our country, both with respect to its public and private, its ancient and modern, its general and particular laws. I am persuaded, indeed, the point upon which I am going to consult you, is so singular, that even those whose great experience in public business must have made

mous size being presented to Domitian, he immediately convened the senate, in order to consult in what manner it should be dressed. The poet mentions the names of the persons who spoke in this remarkable debate, together with their several opinions upon a question so important, concluding his satire with this pathetic wish:

Atque utinam his potius nugis tota illa dedisset
Tempora sævitiæ, claras quibus abstulit urbi
Illustresque animas impune!——

Ah! as this day, that he had spent the rest,
And his dire reign had only been a jest!
Nor Rome her noblest blood had tamely seen
Flow unrevenged!——

them, one should suppose, acquainted with every thing of this nature, were either doubtful, or absolutely ignorant in what manner to proceed. I shall be the more excusable, therefore, if I happen to have been mistaken; as you will gain so much the higher praise, if you can set me right in an affair, which it is not clear has ever yet fallen within your observation. The inquiry, then, before the house, was concerning the death of Afranius Dexter, who being found murdered, it was uncertain whether he fell by his own hands, or by those of his freedmen; and if the latter, whether they committed the fact in obedience* to the commands of Afranius, or were prompted to it by their own villany. After they had been put to the torture, a certain senator (it is of no importance to mention his name, but if you are desirous to know, it was myself) was for acquitting them; another proposed, that they should be banished; and a third, that they should suffer death. These several opinions were so extremely different, that it was impossible either of them could stand with the other; and, therefore, in taking the votes, I thought they ought to be numbered separately. For, what is there in common between the opinion of those who deemed the accused deserved banishment, and those who were of opinion they merited death? certainly nothing more than between those who voted for ban-

* Those who destroyed themselves frequently made use of the hands of their slaves for that purpose. Thus Brutus and Cassius, after the loss of that fatal battle which decided the liberties of Rome, ran each of them upon the swords of their slaves. *Florus*, l. 4. c. 7.

ishment, and the others who were for acquitting the prisoners. Though, indeed, he who was for discharging them approached nearer to the sentiments of him who proposed exile, than the other who moved that they should suffer death: for both the former agreed at least in this, that their lives should be spared, whereas the latter were for a capital conviction. In the mean while, those senators who were for punishing with death, and those who proposed banishment, sate together on the same side of the house: and thus, by a present appearance of union, covered their real disagreement. I moved, therefore, that each of the three opinions should be separately voted, and that two of them should not, under favour of a short truce between themselves, join against the third. I insisted, that such of the members who were for capital punishment should divide from the others who voted for banishment; and that these two distinct parties should not be permitted to form themselves into a body, in opposition to those who declared for acquittal, when they would immediately after disunite again: for it was not material that they agreed in disliking one of the proposals, since they differed with respect to the other two. It seemed very extraordinary, that he who moved that the freedmen should be banished, and the slaves suffer death, should not be allowed to join these two motions in one, but that the question should be ordered to be put to the house in the disjunctive; and yet that the votes of those who were for inflicting capital punishment upon the freedmen, should be taken in conjunction with those who were for banish-

ing them. For if, in the former instance, it was reasonable that the motion should be divided, because it comprehended two distinct propositions; I could not see why, in the latter case, suffrages so extremely different should be thrown into the same scale. Permit me then, notwithstanding the point is already determined, to go over it again, as if it were still undecided, and to lay before you those reasons, at my ease, which I offered to the house in the midst of much interruption and clamour. Let us suppose there had been only three judges appointed to hear this cause, one of which was of opinion, that the parties in question deserved death; the other, that they should only be banished; and the third, that they ought to be acquitted; should the two former unite their weight to overpower the latter, or should each be separately balanced? For, the first and second are no more compatible with each other than the second and third. They ought, therefore, to be counted in the senate as contrary opinions, since they were delivered as different ones. Suppose the same person had moved, that they should both have been banished and put to death; could they possibly, in pursuance of this opinion, have suffered both punishments? Or could it have been esteemed as one consistent motion, when it united two such different decisions? Why then should the same opinion, when delivered by distinct persons, be considered as one and entire, which would not be deemed so if proposed by a single man? Does not the law manifestly imply, that a distinction is to be made between those who are for a capital conviction, and those who are for

banishment, in the very form of words made use of when the house is ordered to divide? "You who are of such an opinion, come to this side; you who are of any other, go over to the side of him whose opinion you follow." Let us examine this form, and weigh every sentence: "You who are of this opinion:" that is, for instance, you who are for banishment, "come on this side;" namely, on the side of him who moved for banishment. From whence it is clear he cannot remain on the side of those who are for death. "You who are for any other;" observe, the law is not contented with barely saying *another*, but it adds *any*. Now can there be a doubt, whether they who declare for a capital conviction are of *any* other opinion, than those who propose exile! "Go over to the side of him whose opinion you follow:" does not the law seem, as it were, to force those who are of different sentiments to contrary sides? Does not the consul himself point out, not only by this solemn form of words, but by his hand and gesture, the place in which every man is to remain, or to which he is to go over? "But, it is objected, if this separation be made between those who vote for inflicting death, and those who are on the side of exile, the opinion for acquitting the prisoners must necessarily prevail." But how does that affect the parties who vote? Certainly it becomes not them to contend by every art, and urge every expedient, that the milder sentence may not take place. "Still," say they, "those are who for condemning the accused, either capitally or to banishment, should first be set in opposition to those who are for

absolving them, and afterwards weighed against each other." Thus, as, in certain public games, some are by lot to engage with the conqueror; so, it seems, in the senate, there is a first and second combat, and of two different sentiments, the prevailing one has still a third to contend with. What! when any particular opinion is received, do not all the rest fall of course? Is it reasonable, then, that one should be thrown into the scale merely to weigh down another? To express my meaning more plainly: unless the two parties, who are respectively for capital punishment and exile, immediately separate upon the first division of the house, it would be to no purpose afterwards to dissent from those with whom they had joined before. But I am dictating instead of receiving instruction. Tell me, then, whether you think these votes should have been taken separately? My sentiments, 'tis true, prevailed; nevertheless, I am desirous to know whether you think I ought to have insisted upon this point, or have yielded, as that member did who declared for capital punishment? For, convinced, I will not say of the legality, but at least of the equity of my proposal, he receded from his own opinion, and went over to the party for exile; fearing, perhaps, if the votes were taken separately, (which he saw would be the case,) the freedmen would be acquitted: for, the numbers were far greater on that side than on either of the other two, separately counted. The consequence was, that those who had been influenced by his authority, when they saw themselves forsaken by his going over to the other party, gave up a motion which

they found abandoned by the first proposer, and deserted, if I may so express it, with their leader. Thus, the three opinions terminated at length in two: and of those, one prevailed, and the other was rejected: while the third, as it was not powerful enough to conquer both the others, had only to choose to which of the two it would yield. Farewell.

LETTER XV.

TO JUNIOR.

I FEAR I have overloaded you by sending so many volumes at once; but, if I have, remember it was your own request. Besides, as you wrote me word you were likely to reap but little from the fruits of your vineyards, I imagined you would be at leisure to *reap* (as we say) the *fruits* of learning. I have received the same bad accounts of my own farms; and am therefore at leisure to compose tracts for you, provided I can but raise money sufficient to furnish me with good parchment. For, should I be reduced to use the coarse and spungy sort, I must either not write at all, or whatever I compose, whether good or bad, must necessarily undergo one general blot! Farewell.

LETTER XVI.

TO PATERNUS.

THE sickness which has lately run through my family, and carried off several of my domestics,

some of them too in the prime of their years, has deeply afflicted me. I have two consolations, however, which, though they are not adequate to so considerable a loss, still they are consolations. One is, that as I have always very readily manumized my slaves, their death does not seem altogether immature, if they lived long enough to receive their freedom: the other, that I have allowed them to make a kind of will,* which I observe as religiously as if they were legally *entitled* to that privilege. I receive and obey their last requests, as so many absolute commands, suffering them to dispose of their effects to whom they please; with this single restriction, that they leave them to some of the family; which, to persons in their station, is to be considered as a sort of commonwealth. But though I endeavour to acquiesce under these reflections, yet the same tenderness which led me to show them these indulgencies, still breaks out, and renders me too sensibly affected by their deaths. However, I would not wish to be incapable of these tender impressions of humanity; though the generality of the world, I know, look upon losses of this kind in no other view, than as a diminution of their property, and fancy, by cherishing such an unfeeling temper, they discover superior fortitude and philosophy. Their *fortitude* and philosophy, I will not dispute, but humane, I am sure they are not; for it is the very *criterion* of true manhood to *feel* those impressions of sorrow, which it endeavours to resist; and to *admit*,

* A slave could acquire no property, and consequently was incapable, by law, of making a will.

not to be above the want, of consolation. But, perhaps, I have detained you too long upon this subject, though not so long as I would. There is a certain pleasure in giving vent to one's grief; especially when we pour out our sorrow in the bosom of a friend, who will approve, or, at least, pardon our tears.* Farewell.

* There is something so uncommonly amiable in this *Family Piece*, that the reader cannot be displeased with being stopped a moment to take a second view of it. If nothing remained of Pliny but this single *trait* of his character, we might nevertheless assuredly pronounce of him, that he was ennobled by every social virtue: for as it is certain the greatest minds have ever been most open to impressions of the humane kind; so every moral virtue necessarily flows from benevolence, as from its true and genuine source. It is impossible that a man, who has a just feeling of the calamities of others, can deliberately break through the moral ties of any kind; because it is certain he cannot do so, without being the occasion of suffering to those who stand within the influence of the particular action. This principle also will ever afford the most unerring test of patriotism, or the public affection; for the cruel and unrelenting, in private and domestic life, can never act upon the true notion of liberty, in the more enlarged relations of public concerns. With great justice, therefore, our author makes this generous principle the evidence of real manhood; as Juvenal describes a tenderness of disposition to be the principal note of distinction which nature has marked out between the rational and brute creation:

——— *Mollissima corda*
Humano generi dare se natura fatetur,
Quæ lachrymas dedit. Hæc nostri pars optima sensus.
——— *Quis enim bonus,—*
Ulla aliena sibi credat mala? separat hoc
Nos a grege mutorum—— Satyr. 15. 131.

Heaven gave the tear humane, a sign confest,
Soft pity dwells within the mortal breast;
That noblest passion noblest bosoms know!——
Turned ever virtue from another's woe?
'Tis man's great privilege, the glorious line
That marks from brute, the human soul divine.

LETTER XVII.

TO MACRINUS.

IS the season with you as rude and boisterous as it is with us? All here is tempest and inundation. The Tiber has swelled its channel, and overflowed its banks far and wide. Though the wise precaution of the emperor had guarded against this evil, by cutting several outlets to the river; it has, nevertheless, flooded all the fields and vallies, and entirely overspread the whole face of the flat country. It seems to have gone out to meet those rivers, which it used to receive and carry off in one united stream; and has driven them back to deluge those countries it could not itself reach. That most delightful of rivers, the Anio,* which seems invited and detained in its course by the charming villas that are situated upon its banks, has almost entirely rooted up and carried away the woods which shaded its borders. It has overthrown whole mountains, and, in endeavouring to find a

* Now called the Teverone, which falls into the Tiber about three miles from Rome. The eloquent Balzac, speaking of a little river, has a thought which is celebrated by Bohours: "*Cette belle eau* (says he) *aime tellement ce pais, qu'elle se divise en mille branches, et fait une infinité d' isles et de tours, a fin de s'y amuser d' avantage.*"—*Dial. sur la man. de bien pens.* p. 137. But he is indebted to Pliny for all the merit of it, as it is plainly a copy from this passage: an observation by no means intended as a reflection upon the French writer, who has too many original beauties of his own to suffer from a discovery of those which are not; it is designed only to show, that the most celebrated author in the epistolary way among the moderns found advantage in conversing with Pliny.

passage through the ruins that obstructed its way, has forced down houses, and risen over the desolation it has occasioned. The inhabitants of the hill countries, who are situated above the reach of this inundation, have been the melancholy spectators of its dreadful effects; having seen costly furniture, instruments of husbandry, plows, and oxen with their drivers, whole herds of cattle, together with the trunks of trees, and beams of the neighbouring villas, floating about in different parts. Nor, indeed, have these more elevated places themselves, to which the waters could not rise, escaped the calamity. A continued heavy rain, as destructive as the river itself, poured down in torrents upon them, and has destroyed all the enclosures which marked that fertile country. It has damaged, likewise, and even overturned, some of the public buildings, where numbers have been miserably buried in the ruins. And thus those people, besides the loss of their effects, have suffered the additional misfortune of lamenting their friends. I am extremely uneasy, lest this extensive ruin should have spread to you: I beg therefore, if it have not, you will immediately ease me of my fears; and indeed, I desire you would inform me, though it actually should; for the difference is not great between fearing a danger and feeling it, except that the evil one feels has some bounds, whereas one's apprehensions have none. For, we can suffer no more than what actually *has* happened, but we fear all that possibly *may* have happened. Farewell.

LETTER XVIII.

TO RUFINUS.

IT is a mistaken maxim, too generally advanced, that a man's will is a kind of mirror, wherein one may clearly discern his genuine character. We have a late instance to the contrary in Domitius Tullus, who appears a much better man since his death, than during his life. After having artfully encouraged the expectations of those who paid court to him, with a view to be his heir, he has left his estate to his niece, whom he adopted. He has given, likewise, several very considerable legacies among his grand-children, and also to his great-grandson. In a word, he has shown himself a kind relation throughout his whole will; which is so much the more to be admired, as it was not expected. This affair has been much the subject of conversation; some representing him as guilty of the basest falsehood and ingratitude; and while they thus complain, as if they were actually his disinherited kindred, their invectives betray the mean motives of the attentions they paid him: others, on the contrary, applauding him extremely for having disappointed the hopes of this infamous* tribe of men, whom, the manners of the age considered, it is but prudence to deceive. They add, that he was not at liberty to make any other will, and that he cannot so properly be said to have

* See Vol. I. Book iv. Let. 15, note.

bequeathed, as returned, his estate to his adopted daughter, since it was by her means he became possessed of it. For, Curtilius Mancia, whose daughter Domitius Lucanus, brother to this Tullus, married, having taken a dislike to his son-in-law, devised his estate to this young lady, (who was the issue of that marriage) upon condition that Lucanus, her father, would emancipate her.* He accordingly did so; but she being afterwards adopted by Tullus, her uncle, the design of Mancia's will was entirely frustrated. For, these two brothers having never divided their patrimony, but living together as joint tenants of one common estate, the daughter of Lucanus, notwithstanding the act of emancipation, returned back again, together with her former fortune, under the dominion of her father, in consequence of this fraudulent adoption. It seems, indeed, to have been the fate of these two brothers, to be enriched by those who had the greatest aversion to them. For, Domitius Afer, by whom they were adopted, left a will in their

* That is, would make her free; for, (as has been observed in the notes above) the power of a father over his children was unlimited amongst the Romans. It extended not only to their fortunes, but their lives, and was even greater than what the laws allowed over their slaves: for if a master sold his slave, who afterwards obtained his freedom, the former owner had no farther claim; whereas, in the case of a son, the father's right was not absolutely extinguished by the sale, but if the son obtained his freedom, he again came under his dominion. This authority could not be wholly disannulled, till the son had been thrice sold, and as often recovered his liberty; it then entirely ceased. The law vested the same power likewise as fully in the adoptive father, as in the natural. Justinian observes, this authority was peculiar to the Romans, and allowed by no other nation whatsoever. *Inst.* l. 1.

favour, which he had made eighteen years before his death; though it was plain he had altered his sentiments with respect to the family, because he was instrumental in procuring the confiscation of their father's estate. There is something extremely singular in the resentment of Afer, and the good fortune of the other two; as it was very extraordinary, on the one hand, that Domitius should endeavour to proscribe the man whose children he had adopted, and on the other, that these brothers should find a parent in the very person that ruined their father. But Tullus acted justly, after having been appointed sole heir by his brother, in prejudice to his own daughter, to restore to her this estate, which came to him from Afer, as well as to devise to her all the fortune which he possessed in common with his brother. His will, therefore, deserves the highest commendation, as it is the dictates of nature, justice, and honour; having thereby returned his obligations to his several relations, according to their respective good offices towards him. He has made a just acknowledgment, likewise, to his wife; having by his will given to that excellent woman, who patiently endured much upon his account, several delightful villas, besides a large sum of money. Indeed, she deserved so much the more at his hands, as she was greatly censured for her marriage with him. It was thought unworthy a person of her rank and merit, after having had a former husband, by whom she had issue, to marry, in the decline of her life, an old man, merely for his wealth, and who was so sickly and infirm, that, even

had he passed the best years of his youth and health with her, she might well have been disgusted with him. He had so entirely lost the use of all his limbs, that he could not move himself in bed without assistance; and the only enjoyment he had of his riches, was to contemplate them. He was even reduced to the wretched necessity (and one cannot mention it without loathing as well as pity) of having his teeth washed and cleansed by others; in allusion to which, he used frequently to say, when he was complaining of the indecencies which his infirmities obliged him to suffer, that he was every day compelled to lick his servant's fingers. Still, however, he lived on, and was willing to accept of life upon these miserable terms. That he lived so long, was particularly owing, indeed, to the care of his wife, who, whatever reputation she might lose at first by her marriage, acquired great honour by her conduct towards him during its continuance.

Thus I have given you all the news of the town, where nothing is talked of but Tullus. It is expected his curiosities will shortly be sold by auction. He had such an abundant collection of ancient statues, that he actually filled an extensive garden with them the very same day he purchased it; not to mention numberless other antiques, which stood neglected in a lumber-room.

Now, if you have any thing worth communicating, in return, I hope you will not refuse the trouble of giving me the intelligence; not only as we are all of us naturally fond, you know, of news, but because interesting anecdotes afford examples which may be of use in respect to our own conduct. Farewell.

LETTER XIX.

TO MAXIMUS.

MY studies prove both an entertainment and consolation to me; and as there is no pleasure I prefer to them, so there is no uneasiness they do not alleviate. In this season, therefore, of dejection, occasioned by the indisposition of my wife, the dangerous sickness of some of my servants, and the death of others, I have recourse to my books, as to the sovereign consolers of my sorrows. It is true, indeed, they teach me a greater sensibility to misfortunes, but they teach me, too, how to bear them with more patience. It is an established rule with me, before I publish any of my productions, to consult the judgment of my friends, and especially yours. I request you, therefore, to examine, with particular care, the performance I here send you, as I am afraid the disquietude of my mind may have prevented me from giving it the attention I ought. For, though I could command my grief so far as to sit down to write, I was not sufficiently master of my heart, to do so with ease and cheerfulness: but if study naturally tends to compose the mind, the mind must be previously in a composed state to give a proper effect to our studies. Farewell.

LETTER XX.

TO GALLUS.

THOSE works of art or nature, which are usually the motives of our travels, are often overlooked and neglected, if they happen to lie within our reach; whether it be that we are naturally less inquisitive concerning those things which are near us, while our curiosity is excited by remote objects; or because the easiness of gratifying a desire is always sure to damp it; or, perhaps, that we defer, from time to time, viewing what we know we have an opportunity of seeing whenever we please. Be the reason what it may, it is certain there are several rarities in and near Rome, which we not only have never seen, but have never so much as heard of; and yet, if they had been the production of Greece, or Egypt, or Asia, or any other country which we admire as fruitful in wonders, they would, long since, have been the subjects both of our reading, conversation, and inspection. For myself, at least, I confess I have lately been entertained with a sight of one of these our indigenous singularities, to which I was an entire stranger before. My wife's grandfather desired I would look upon his estate near Ameria.* As I was walking over his grounds, I was shown a lake that lies below them, called Vadimon,† which I was informed had several very extraordinary qual-

* Now called Amelia, an episcopal city in Ombria.

† Now called *Lago di Bassanello*.

ities attending it. This raised my curiosity to take a nearer view. Its form is exactly circular; there is not the least obliquity or winding; but all is regular and even, as if it had been hollowed and cut out by the hand of art. The water is of a clear sky blue, though with somewhat of a greenish cast; it seems, by its taste and smell, impregnated with sulphur, and is deemed of great efficacy in all fractures of the limbs, which it is supposed to consolidate. Notwithstanding it is but of a moderate extent, yet the winds have a great effect upon it, frequently throwing it into violent commotions. No vessels are suffered to sail here, as its waters are held sacred,* but several floating islands† swim about in it, covered with reeds and rushes, together with other plants, which the neighbouring marsh and the borders of the lake produce. These islands differ in their size and shape; but the edges of all of them are worn away by their frequent collision against the shore and each other. They have all of them the same height and motion, and their respective roots, which are formed like the keel of a boat, may be seen hanging down in the water, on whichever side you stand. Sometimes they move in a cluster, and seem to

* See above, Letter 8. of this Book, note.

† The credit of this account does not rest entirely upon our author: Pliny the elder mentions these floating islands, (l. 2. 95.) and so does Seneca, who accounts for them upon philosophical principles. (Q. N. l. 6. 25.) Varenius says, that in Honduras, a province in America, there is a lake in which are several little hills planted with shrubs, &c. tossed up and down by the winds. And he quotes Boethius, the Scots historian, who affirms, that, in a large *Loch*, called *Lomond Loch*, in Scotland, there is a floating island, upon which cattle graze. See VAREN. *Geog.* Vol. I. p. 412.

form one entire little continent; sometimes they are dispersed into different quarters by the winds; at other times, when it is calm, they float up and down separately. You may frequently see one of the larger islands sailing along with a lesser joined to it, like a ship with its long boat; or, perhaps, seeming to strive which shall out-swim the other: then again they all assemble in one station, and afterwards joining themselves to the shore, sometimes on one side, and sometimes on the other, cause the lake to appear considerably less till at last uniting in the centre, they restore it to its usual size. The sheep which graze upon the borders of this lake, frequently go upon these islands to feed, without perceiving that they have left the shore, till they are alarmed by finding themselves surrounded with water; and in the same manner, when the wind drives them back again, they return, without being sensible that they are landed. This lake empties itself into a river, which, after running a little way, sinks under ground; and if any thing is thrown in, brings it up again where the stream emerges. I have given you this account, because I imagined it would not be less new, nor less agreeable to you, than it was to me; as I know you take the same pleasure as myself, in contemplating the works of nature. Farewell.

LETTER XXI.

TO ARRIANUS.

NOTHING, in my opinion, gives a more amiable and becoming grace to our studies, as well

as manners, than to temper the serious with the gay, lest the former should degenerate into austereness, and the latter run up into levity. Upon this maxim it is, that I diversify my graver works with compositions of a lighter nature. I had chosen a convenient place and season for some productions of that sort to make their appearance in; and designing to accustom them early to the tables of the idle, I fixed upon the month of July,* which is usually a time of vacation to the courts of justice, in order to read them to some of my friends at supper: and, accordingly, I placed a desk before each couch.† But as I happened that morning to be unexpectedly called away to attend a cause, I took occasion to preface my recital with an apology. I entreated my audience not to impute it to me as any want of due regard for the business to which

* The months of July and August was a time of vacation to the Roman lawyers; the courts of justice being then shut up, that the farmers might not be interrupted in their harvest, by being obliged to attend their law-suits at Rome.

——— *messesque revectæ*
Dimisere Forum; nec jam tibi turba reorum
Vestibulo, querulique rogant exire clientes;
Cessat centeni moderatrix judicis hasta.

STATIUS, Sylv. l. 4. 50.

Returning harvest bids contention cease,
And through the wrangling Forum all is peace;
No teazing clients now besiege thy way,
Nor judges sage the solemn spear display.

Nevertheless the courts, as appears from this letter, were sometimes opened during this season of vacation, upon cases, perhaps, of particular emergency.

† The ancient Romans lay extended upon couches during their suppers, which were always in the evening, that time being the general hour of their principal meal.

I had invited them, that, on the very day I had appointed to read my performances to some of my friends, (though indeed but few,) I did not refuse my good offices to others in their law-affairs. I assured them, I would observe the same rule in my writings, and should always give the preference to matters of importance, before those of entertainment; to serious engagements, before amusing ones; and to the business of my friends, before my own. The poems I recited consisted of a variety of subjects in different measures. It is by such arts as these, we, who dare not rely upon the single force of our genius, endeavour to avoid satiating our readers. In compliance with the earnest solicitation of my audience, I recited during two days successively; but not in the manner that several practice, by making a merit of passing over the less shining passages; on the contrary, I omitted nothing, and freely confessed it. I read the whole, that I might correct the whole; which it is impossible those, who only select particular passages, should do. The latter method, indeed, may have more the appearance of modesty, and perhaps respect; but the former shows a greater ingeniousness, as well as a more affectionate disposition towards the audience. For, the belief that a man's friends have so much regard to him, as not to be weary upon these occasions, is a sure indication of the love he bears them. To say the truth, one has little obligation to an audience, if they assemble merely with a view to their own entertainment. He, who had rather find his friend's performance correct than make it so, is to be considered as a stranger, or one who is too

indolent to give himself any trouble. Your friendship for me leaves me no room to doubt, that you are impatient to read my book, even in its present very imperfect state; and so you shall, but not till I have made those corrections, which were the principal inducement of my recital. You are already acquainted with some parts of it; but even those, after they shall have been polished, (or, perhaps, spoiled, as is sometimes the case by too frequent revisals) will seem new to you. For, when a composition has undergone various changes, it acquires an air of novelty, even in those very parts which remain unaltered. Farewell.

LETTER XXII.

TO GEMINITUS.

HAVE you never observed a sort of people, who, though they are themselves the abject slaves of every vice, show a kind of malicious indignation against the immoral conduct of others; and are most severe to those whom they most resemble? yet, surely, a lenity of disposition, even in persons who have the least occasion for clemency themselves, is, of all virtues, the most becoming. The highest of characters, in my estimation, is *his*, who is as ready to pardon the moral errors of mankind, as if he were every day guilty of some himself; and at the same time as cautious of committing a fault, as if he never forgave one. It is a rule, then, which we should upon all occasions, both private and public, most religiously observe, "to be inex-

orable to our own failings, while we treat those of the rest of the world with tenderness, not excepting even those who forgive none but themselves;" remembering always what the humane, and, *therefore*, as well as upon other accounts, the *great* Thrasea used frequently to say: "He who hates vice hates mankind."* You will ask me, perhaps, who it is that has given occasion to these reflections? You must know a certain person lately—but of that when we meet,—though, upon second thoughts, not even *then*, lest, whilst I condemn and expose *his* conduct, I should act counter to that maxim I particularly recommend. Whoever, therefore, and whatever he is, shall remain in silence: for, though there may be some use, perhaps, in setting a mark upon the man, for the sake of example, there will be more, however, in sparing him, for the sake of humanity. Farewell.

LETTER XXIII.

TO MARCELLINUS.

THE deep concern I am under for the death of Junius Avitus has rendered me incapable either

* The meaning of this maxim seems to be, that, as it is extremely difficult to separate the action from the man, we should not suffer the errors of the world to raise in us that acrimony of indignation, which, if well examined, perhaps, will be oftener found to proceed from some secret principle of malice, than a just abhorrence of vice; "*Satius est* (as Seneca observes) *publicos mores et humana vitia, placide accipere:*" a general philanthropy, and universal benovolence, being the most genuine marks, by which virtue distinguishes those who are truly in her interest.—If this sense be admitted, there is no need to suppose, (with some of the commentators,) that any mistake has crept into the text.

of business, study, or amusement. He was invested with the laticlave* in my house; as in all the honours he solicited, he was constantly assisted by my interest. I will add, too, his affection and esteem for me were so great, that he formed his manners, and regulated his conduct, by my guidance and direction: a disposition extremely uncommon in the youth of this age; for, who among them will now deign to submit to the experience and authority of their superiors? They think themselves at once in full possession of all wisdom and knowledge; and without revering or imitating the virtues of any, imagine they are a sufficient example to themselves. But Avitus was of a far different turn; he showed his wisdom, in believing there were some who had more; and discovered his knowledge, in his desire to learn. He was ever consulting his friends upon some point relating to his studies, or his conduct; and he always returned from them with advantage, either by the advice he received, or the disposition he showed. With what respect did he treat Servianus, one of the most accomplished men of the age! Avitus knew how to value such uncommon merit, as well as to endear himself to him in his turn. Accordingly, when Servianus went lieutenant from Germany into Pannonia,† he attended him as tribune; not so much in the character of his fellow-soldier, as of his friend and admirer. With what care and

* See Vol. I. Book ii. Letter 9. note.

† A very extensive province, comprehending part of Austria, Hungary, &c.

integrity did he execute the office of quæstor under several consuls, who all esteemed him, not only as an useful and experienced officer, but as an easy and agreeable companion! With what zeal and application did he solicit this very ædileship,* from the enjoyment of which he is now prematurely snatched! a reflection that gives a peculiar poignancy to my affliction for the loss of him. His unavailing labours, his fruitless assiduities, and the honour which he merited only, not enjoyed, are for ever in my thoughts. The circumstance of his having first put on the laticlave under my roof; the first and the last suffrage I ever gave him; the conversations we have had, and the consultations we have held, all return fresh upon my mind. I am struck with the most tender sorrow when I consider his youth, and reflect upon the irreparable loss his family has sustained: an aged parent; a young wife, to whom he had not been married much above a year; an infant daughter, just born; so many pleasing hopes, so many tender joys, all reversed and destroyed in one day! When he was just elected ædile; when he had lately commenced a bridegroom; when he was newly made a father—he was suddenly snatched from the midst of these satisfactions; and has left behind him an honour untasted, a mother inconsoleable, a widowed wife, and an or-

* The ædiles were, at first, two officers chosen out of the body of the commons, in order to assist the tribunes in the discharge of some particular parts of their functions, the chief of which was the care of public edifices. Others were afterwards elected out of the nobility, to inspect public games, determine causes relating to the selling or exchanging of estates, to supervise the public stores of corn, and other provisions, &c.—KEN. *Antiq.* p. 116, 117.

phan infant, who will have the misfortune of never having known her father! But what increases my fears upon this melancholy occasion is, that, being absent when this accident happened, I never knew of his sickness, till I heard of his death; and had no time to prepare myself for this cruel stroke, by previously apprehending it! Such is the present distress of my mind! You must not wonder, then, that it is the whole subject of my letter; for I am not able, at present, to think or talk of any thing else. Farewell.

LETTER XXIV.

TO MAXIMUS.

THE friendship I profess for you, induces me, not indeed to direct (for you are far above the want of a guide) but to remind you, however, of what you already know, and to admonish you carefully to observe, and firmly to put it in practice; in other words, to know it to all the more useful purposes of knowledge. You will consider yourself as sent to that noble province, Achaia, the real and genuine Greece, where politeness, learning, and even agriculture itself, are supposed to have taken their first rise; as sent to govern a state composed of free cities; that is, to a society of men who breathe the spirit of true manhood and liberty,* who maintained the rights they re-

* "It is remarkable, that even after Greece was absorbed in the Roman empire, and became a province to it under the name of Achaia, it did not lose, with its power and sovereignty, that lively

ceived from nature, by courage, by virtue, by alliances; in a word, by civil and religious faith. Revere the gods and heroes their founders; the glory of their ancient days; and even that very antiquity itself; for age, as it is venerable in men, is in states sacred. Honour them, therefore, for their deeds of old renown; for those which true, and (I do not

sense and love of liberty, which was the peculiar character of that people, amongst whom the arts were produced, and brought to perfection. The Romans, when they had subdued Greece, left that generous, brave, polite people, in possession of many of their rights and privileges. And they maintained such an ardent zeal for liberty, that, to name no other instances of it, when the civil wars happened in Italy, the Athenians very warmly espoused the part of Pompey, who fought for the republic; and after Cæsar was killed, hey erected statues in honour of Brutus and Cassius, near to those of Harmodius and Aristogiton, their ancient deliverers. It was hence Greece, Athens in particular, after it was very much fallen and degenerated, continued still to be the metropolis of sciences, the school of all the fine arts, the standard and centre of good taste in all works of genius, to Cicero's time, and long afterwards; insomuch, that Rome sent its most illustrious youth to be perfected there in polite literature, eloquence, philosophy, and all the ingenious arts and sciences; and the emperors who loved learning, if they could not go to Greece, and become scholars there, as some of them did, brought Greece to them, by inviting and receiving into their palaces its most celebrated professors and artists, and even entrusting the education of their children with Greek masters. Now, their continuing to excel in the arts and sciences, to what else can it be attributed, but to this, that, with some small remains of liberty, they retained the spirit of liberty, the love of it, and zeal for it? It was, indeed, in consequence of this alone, that they maintained, in some degree, even till Italy was quite over-run with barbarism, a sovereignty the Romans could not take from them; a sovereignty in science, arts, and good taste. "Tis impossible to account for it in any other way: they preserved the arts in a very great degree, because they retained the spirit of liberty in a very extraordinary one."—TURNBULL *on Ancient Painting*, p. 100.

scruple to add) which fabulous, history has recorded. Indulge them in the full exercise of their dignities, their privileges, and their very vanity. Remember, it was from this nation we derived our laws ;* that she did not receive ours by conquest, but gave us her own in consequence of our particular request. Remember, it is Athens that you approach ; it is Lacedemon you govern : and to deprive so renowned a people of the declining shadow, the remaining name of liberty, would be a hardship, would be even a barbarity of the severest kind. Physicians, you see, though with respect to diseases there is no difference between the free and the slave, yet treat persons of the former rank with more tenderness than those of the latter. Reflect on the illustrious figure these cities once made ; but so reflect, as not to despise them for what they now are. Far be pride and asperity from my friend ; nor fear, by a proper condescension, to lay yourself open to contempt. Can he, who is vested with the power and bears the ensigns of authority, can *he* fail of meeting with respect, unless by pursuing base and sordid measures, and first breaking through that awful reverence he owes to himself ? Ill, believe me, is power proved by insult ; ill can terror com-

* About the year of Rome 300, that is, 452 years before Christ, ambassadors were sent into Greece, to make a collection of such laws and customs, as the wisdom of that polite people had established, particularly the famous ones of Solon. At their return, these laws were approved and confirmed, and, together with some additional ones, were engraven on ten tables of brass. Two other tables of laws were soon afterwards added to these, which, together with the former, went by the name of the *twelve tables*, and were looked upon as the fountain of all law, public and private. Liv. l. 3. c. 31. Ferriere *Hist. des Lois, civ.* c. 5.

mand veneration; and far more efficacious is affection in obtaining one's purpose than fear. For terror operates no longer than its object is present, but love produces its effects when the object is at a distance: and as absence changes the former into hatred, it raises the latter into respect. It behoves you, therefore, (and I cannot repeat it too often,) it behoves you well to consider the end of your office, and to represent to yourself how great and important is the administration of governing a free state. For, what is more becoming our social nature than well regulated government, or more valuable than liberty? How ignominious, then, must his conduct be, who turns the first into anarchy, and the last into slavery. To these considerations, let me add, that you have an established reputation to maintain: the fame you acquired by the function of the quæstorship in Bythinia;* the good opinion of the emperor; the credit you obtained when you were tribune and prætor; in a word, this very government, which may be looked upon as the reward of your former services; are so many glorious weights which are incumbent upon you to support with suitable dignity. The more earnestly, therefore, ought you to endeavour, that it may not be said you showed greater urbanity, integrity, and ability, in a rude province, remote from Rome, than in one which lies so much nearer to the capital; in the midst of a nation of slaves, than among a free people; that it may not be remarked, that it was chance, and not judgment, appointed you to this office; when your character was unknown and unexperienced,

* A province in Anatolia, or Asia the Less.

not tried and approved. For, it is a maxim, which your reading and conversation must have often suggested to you, that it is a far greater disgrace to lose the fame one has once attained, than never to have acquired it. I again beg you to be persuaded, that I do not write this letter as presuming to instruct, but to remind you. Though, indeed, if I had, it would have only been in consequence of the great affection I bear you; a sentiment which I am in no apprehension of carrying beyond its just limits: for, there can be no danger of excess where one cannot love too well. Farewell.

THE LETTERS OF PILNY.

BOOK NINTH.

LETTER I.

TO MAXIMUS.

I HAVE frequently advised you, to be as expeditious as possible in publishing what you have written, either in defence of yourself, or against Planta; or rather, indeed, (as the circumstances of the case demanded,) what you drew up with both those views; but I particularly press this advice upon you *now* that I hear he is dead. For though you read this piece to several of your friends, and put it into the hands of others, yet I should be extremely sorry, that the world should suspect you did not venture to compose, till after his death, what it is most certain you had finished during his life. Let not the character my friend has acquired of firmness and resolution be called in question; as it will not, when both the candid and the malicious world shall know, that the death of your adversary did not give you the confidence of writing, but only anticipated the opportunity of publishing this piece. Thus you will avoid the imputation,

With coward joy to triumph o'er the dead:*

* Hom. Od. lib. 22.

For what you wrote, and actually recited before his death, will be considered as published during his life, provided you publish it soon. If, therefore, you have any other work upon your hands, let me intreat you to lay it aside, and give your last finishing touches to this performance. It seemed to me, indeed, when I formerly read it, to want no improvements; and so it ought to seem now to you, as neither the subject requires, nor the time will admit, of longer delay. Farewell.

LETTER II.

TO SABINUS.

YOUR request that I would write to you frequent and long letters, is very pleasing to me. If I have forborne to do so, it is partly in consideration of the important affairs in which you are employed; and partly from some very cold and uninteresting occupations of my own, which engage my thoughts, and damp my imagination. Besides, I have not a sufficient supply of matter for frequent letters; and am by no means in the same situation that Tully was, whom you point out to me as an example. He not only possessed a most enlarged genius, but the circumstances of the times wherein he lived, furnished him with a variety of noble occasions of exercising it. As for myself, you know (without my telling you) to what narrow limits I am confined, unless my letters were to turn upon the fictitious and pedantic topics of the schools. But when I consider you in the midst of arms and encampments,

animated by martial music, or fatigued with toil and heat; how absurd would it be to talk to you upon such subjects? This is my apology, and I think it a reasonable one; however, I almost wish you would not accept it: for to reject the excuses of a friend, upon such an occasion, be they ever so just, is an evident proof of a warm affection. Farewell.

LETTER III.

TO PAULINUS.

MANKIND differ in their notions of supreme happiness; but in my opinion he truly possesses it, who lives in the conscious anticipation of honest fame, and the glorious figure he shall make in the eyes of posterity. I confess, if I had not the reward of an immortal reputation in view, I should prefer a life of uninterrupted ease and indolent retirement to any other. There seem to be but two points worthy our attention; endless fame, or the short duration of human life. Those who are actuated by the former motive, must labour to attain it with the utmost exertion of their powers; while such as are influenced by the latter, should quietly resign themselves to repose, nor wear out a short life, as many we see do, in a painful course of ill-directed pursuits, and then sink at last into a total dissatisfaction both of themselves and of the world. These are my daily reflections, and I communicate them to you, in order to renounce them, if you should not join with me in the same sentiments; as undoubtedly you will, who are ever meditating some worthy deed to render your name immortal. Farewell.

LETTER IV.

TO MACRINUS.

I SHOULD fear you would think the oration, which you receive with this letter, immoderately long, if it were not of such a nature as to require being divided into several sections; which, consisting of distinct charges, have the appearance of so many separate speeches. Wherever, therefore, you begin or end, you may consider what follows, either as connected with what precedes, or making of itself a new subject; so that you may look upon it as very diffuse upon the whole, and yet as extremely concise with respect to its particular parts. Farewell.

LETTER V.

TO TIRO.

YOU are greatly to be applauded for the just manner with which, as I am informed, (and I make very strict enquiry,) you administer the government of your province; one principal branch of which is to distinguish merit in every degree, and so to gain the love of the lower rank, as to preserve, at the same time, the affection of their superiors. But it is an error many have fallen into, that while they endeavour to avoid the appearance of favouring the great, they run into the contrary extreme, and incur the imputation of acting with ill manners or ill nature; an error which you are far from committing,

I well know. However, I cannot forbear adding a caution to my praise, and recommending it to you, to conduct yourself in such a manner, as to preserve the proper distinction of rank and dignity. For, to level and confound the different orders of society is far from producing an equality among mankind; it is, in fact, the most unequal thing imaginable. Farewell.

LETTER VI.

TO CALVISIUS.

I HAVE spent these several last days in my study, with the most pleasing tranquillity. You will ask, how that can be possible in the midst of Rome? It happened to be the season of celebrating the Circensian games;* an entertainment for which I have not the least taste. They have no novelty, no variety to recommend them; nothing, in short, one would wish to be present at twice. It is the more surprising, therefore, that so many thousand people should be possessed with the childish passion of desiring often to see a parcel of horses gallop, and men standing erect in their chariots. If, indeed, it were the swiftness of the horses, or the skill of the charioteers, that attracted them, there might be some little pretence of reason on

* These games were originally of Grecian extraction, but first introduced among the Romans by Romulus, in order to favour his design of carrying off the Sabine virgins: they consisted of horse and chariot races, &c.

their side. But it is the *dress* they favour;* it is the dress that captivates them. And if, in the midst of the course, the different contenders were to change habits, their different partizans would change sides, and instantly desert the very same men and horses whom they just before were eagerly following, with their eyes, as far as they could see, and shouting their names with all the warmth of vociferous exclamation. Such mighty charms, such wonderous power is there in the colour of a paltry tunic! and this in the sentiments, not only of the vulgar, (more contemptible than the uniform they espouse,) but even in the opinion of some grave personages. When I observe such men thus insatiably fond of so silly, so low, so uninteresting, so common an entertainment, I congratulate myself that I am insensible to these pleasures; and am glad to employ the leisure of this season upon my studies, which others throw away upon the most idle occupations. Farewell.

LETTER. VII.

TO ROMANUS.

I AM glad to find, by your letter, that you are engaged in building; for I may now defend my

* The performers at these games were divided into companies, distinguished by the particular colour of their habits; the principal of which were the white, the red, the blue, and the green. Accordingly, the spectators favoured one or the other colour, as humour and caprice inclined them. In the reign of Justinian, a tumult arose in Constantinople, occasioned merely by a contention among the partizans of these several colours, wherein no less than 30,000 men lost their lives.—PROCOP. *de Bell. Persic.* l. 1.

own conduct by your example. I am myself occupied in the same sort of work; and since I have you on my side, who shall deny I have reason too? We are pretty much agreed, likewise, I find, in our situations; and as your buildings are carrying on upon the sea-coast, mine are rising upon the side of the Larian lake. I have several villas upon the borders of this lake, but there are two particularly, in which I take most delight, so they give me most employment. They are both situated like those at Baiæ :* one of them stands upon a

* Now called Castello di Baia, in Terra di Lavoro. It was the place the Romans chose for their winter retreat, and which they frequented upon account of its warm baths. Some few ruins of the beautiful villas that once covered this delightful coast still remain; and nothing can give one a higher idea of the prodigious expence and magnificence of the Romans, in their private buildings, than the manner in which some of these were situated. It appears, from this letter, as well as from several other passages in the classic writers, that they actually projected into the sea, being erected upon vast piles sunk for that purpose. Virgil draws a beautiful simile from this custom, where he compares the massy spear which Turnus hurled at Bitias, to one of those enormous piles thrown into the Baian sea :

Qualis in Euboico Baiarum littore quondam
Saxea pila cadit, magnis quam molibus ante
Constructum jaciunt ponto; sic illa ruinam
Prona trahit penitusque vadis illisa recumbit :
Miscent se maria, et nigræ attolluntur arenæ.

Æn. ix. 710.

So from the Baian mole, whose structures rise
High o'er the flood, a massy fragment flies;
The rapid rolling pile all headlong sweeps
With one vast length of ruin to the deeps;
Thick boil the billows, and on every side
Work the dark sands, and blacken all the tide.

PITT.

rock, and has a prospect of the lake; the other actually touches it. The first, supported as it were by the lofty buskin,* I call my *tragic*: the other, as resting upon the humble sock, my *comic* villa. They have each their particular beauties, which

Horace, also, in one of his moral odes, points out and exposes this amazing luxury of building:

Tu secanda marmora
Locas sub ipsum funus; et sepulcri
Immemor, struis domos;
Marisque Baiis obstrepentis urges
Summovere littora,
Parum locuples continente ripa.
Od. 18. l. 2.

—You, with thoughtless pride elate,
Unconscious of impending fate,
Command the pillared dome to rise,
When lo! thy tomb forgotten lies;
And though the waves indignant roar,
Forward you urge the Baian shore,
While earth's too narrow bounds in vain
Thy guilty progress would restrain.
Mr. Francis.

And here, indeed, luxury seems to have reigned in her most licentious refinements of all kinds; while the principal amusement of the place consisted in sailing upon the gulph in gaily painted barks, accompanied with all the melting softness that exquisite wines, fine women, and rapturous music could inspire. There was something even in the natural, as well as artificial turn of the scene, which seemed formed to dissolve the mind into a state of softness and dissipation; insomuch, that Seneca, with all his stoical fortitude, durst not trust himself in it above a day. See Seneca, *Ep.* 51.

* The buskin was a kind of high shoe worn upon the stage by the actors of tragedy, in order to give them a more heroical elevation of stature; as the sock was something between a shoe and slipper, and appropriated to the comic players.

recommend themselves to me so much the more, as they are of different kinds. The former commands a wider prospect of the lake; the latter enjoys a nearer view of it. *This*, by an easy bend, embraces a little bay; the promontory upon which the *other* stands forms two. *Here* you have a straight walk, extending itself along the banks of the lake; *there*, a spacious terrace that falls by a gentle descent towards it. The former does not feel the force of the waves; the latter breaks them: from *that* you see the fishing vessels below; from *this* you may fish yourself, and throw your line from your chamber, and almost from your bed, as from a boat. It is the beauties, therefore, these agreeable villas possess, that tempt me to add to them those which are wanting. But I need not assign a reason to you; who, undoubtedly, will think it a sufficient one that I follow your example. Farewell.

LETTER VIII.

TO AUGURINUS.

WERE I to bestow praise on *you*, from whom I have received so much, I am afraid it would seem to proceed, not so much from my judgment, as my gratitude. Nevertheless, I will not scruple to say, that I think all your productions are beautiful; especially, you may be sure, those of which I am the subject. And the same reason will account both for their deserving that character, and for my thinking so; for as, on the one hand, you ever

ceed best when friendship inspires you, so, on the other, I always like most what flatters my vanity. Farewell.

LETTER IX.

TO COLO.

I GREATLY admire the generous grief you express for the death of Pompeius Quinctianus, as it is a proof, that your affection for your departed friend does not terminate with his life. Far different from those who love, or rather, I should more properly say, who counterfeit love to none but the living. Nor indeed even *that* any longer, than they are the favourites of fortune; for the unhappy are no more the object of their remembrance than the dead. But *your* friendship is raised upon a more lasting foundation, and the constancy of your affection can only end with your life. Quinctianus, most certainly, well deserved to meet with that generous warmth from his friends, of which he was himself so bright an example. He loved them in prosperity; protected them in adversity; lamented them in death. How open was his countenance! how modest his conversation! how equally did he temper gravity with gaiety! how fond was he of learning! how judicious his sentiments! how dutiful to a father of a very different character! and how happily did he reconcile filial piety to inflexible virtue, continuing a good son, without forfeiting the title of a good man! But why do I aggravate your affliction by reminding you of his merit?

Yet I know your affection for the memory of this excellent youth is so strong, that you had rather endure that pain, than suffer his virtues to be passed over in silence; especially by me, whose applause, you imagine, will adorn his actions, extend his fame, and restore him, as it were, to that life from which he is prematurely snatched. Farewell.

LETTER X.

TO TACITUS.*

I SHOULD be glad to follow your precepts; but there is such a scarcity of boars, that it is impossible to pay, at the same time, equal homage to Minerva and Diana, who, you think, ought to be jointly worshipped. I must content myself, therefore, with offering my single devotion to the former; and even *that* with some restriction, considering the heats of the season, and the privileged indolence of retirement. I composed, indeed, a few trifles in my

* The learned Catanæus, with some other commentators, imagines this letter does not belong to Pliny, but is the answer of Tacitus to the 6th epistle of the first book. He supports this conjecture, indeed, by no authority; only thinks, it falls in exactly with the letter to which he supposes it an answer, and fancies he discovers something in the style different from our author's manner. But, upon a comparison of the two letters, there seems little reason to believe one is an answer to the other. And as to any difference of style, (if there really be any, which the translator confesses he has not penetration enough to discover,) it is much too precarious an argument to have any weight in the case. The supposition of Casaubon seems more probable, who thinks this epistle might be occasioned by one from Tacitus, wherein he reminded Pliny of his own advice to him, in that letter to which Catanæus imagines this to be an answer.

journey hither, which are only worthy of being destroyed, as they are written with the same careless unstudied manner that one usually chats upon the road. Since I came to my villa, I have made some few additions to them, not finding myself in a humour to turn my thoughts to things of more consequence. Thus my poems, which you suppose I am finishing with so much advantage amidst the silence and solemnity of woods and groves, are, in truth, wholly at a stand. But I have revised an oration or two; though that kind of business is so unpleasant, as rather to resemble rustic labours, than rural amusements. Farewell.

LETTER XI.

TO GEMINUS.

YOUR letter was particularly acceptable to me, as it mentioned your desire that I would send you something of mine, addressed to you, to insert in your works. I shall find an occasion of complying with your request more proper than that which you propose; the subject you point out to me being attended with some objections; and when you consider it again, you will think so. As I did not imagine there were any booksellers at Lugdunum,* I am so much the more pleased to learn that my works are sold there. I rejoice to find they maintain the same character abroad, which they raised at home; and I begin to flatter myself they have some merit, since persons of such distant countries are agreed in their opinion concerning them. Farewell.

* Lyons, in the Lyonois, a province of France.

LETTER XII.

TO JUNIOR.

A CERTAIN friend of mine lately chastised his son, in my presence, for being somewhat too expensive in the article of dogs and horses. "And pray," I asked him, when the youth was withdrawn, "did you never commit a fault yourself which deserved your father's correction? Are you not sometimes, even now, guilty of errors, which your son, were he in your place, might with equal gravity reprove? Are not all mankind subject to indiscretions? And have we not each of us our particular follies in which we fondly indulge ourselves?"

The great affection I have for you, induced me to set this instance of unreasonable severity before you, as a caution not to treat your son with too much rigour and austerity. Consider, he is but a boy, and that there was a time when you were of the same age. In exerting, therefore, the authority of a father, remember always that you are a man, and the parent of a man. Farewell.

LETTER XIII.

TO QUADRATUS.

THE pleasure and attention with which you perused the vindication I published of Helvidius,*

* He was accused of treason, under pretence that, in a dramatic piece which he composed, he had, in the characters of Paris and Oenone, reflected upon Domitian for divorcing his wife Domitia.—*Suet. in vit. Domit.* cap. 10.

has greatly raised your curiosity, it seems, to be informed of those particulars, relating to that affair, which are not mentioned in the defence; as you were too young to be present yourself at that transaction. When Domitian was assassinated, a glorious opportunity, I thought, offered itself, of pursuing the guilty, vindicating the injured, and advancing my own reputation. But, amidst an infinite variety of the blackest crimes, none appeared to me more atrocious, than that a senator, of prætorian dignity, and invested with the sacred character of a judge, should, even in the very senate itself, lay violent hands upon a member* of that august assembly; upon one who formerly had the honour of being consul, and who then stood arraigned before him. Besides this general consideration, I had, likewise, a particular intimacy with Helvidius, as far as it was possible to hold with one, who, fearing the tyranny of the times, endeavoured to veil the lustre of his fame, and his virtues, in obscurity and retirement. Arria likewise, and her daughter Fannia, who was mother-in-law to Helvidius, were in the number of my friends. But it was not so much private attachments, as the honour of the public, a just indignation at the action, and the danger of the example if it should pass unpunished, that animated me upon this occasion. At the first restoration of liberty,† every man singled out his particular enemy, (though, it must be confessed, those only of a lower rank,) and, in the

* Helvidius.

† Upon the accession of Nerva to the empire, after the death of Domitian.

midst of much clamour and confusion, no sooner brought the charge, than procured the condemnation. But, for myself, I thought it would have more the appearance of moderation, as well as spirit, not to take advantage of the general resentment of the public, but to crush this criminal with the single weight of his own enormous guilt. When, therefore, the first heat of public indignation began to cool, and declining passion gave way to justice, though I was at that time under great affliction for the loss of my wife,* I sent to Anteia, the widow of Helvidius, and desired her to come to me, as my late misfortune prevented me from appearing in public. When she arrived, I acquainted her with my intention not to suffer the injuries her husband had received to pass unrevenged; and desired her to consult with Arria and Fannia, (who were just returned from exile,) whether she and they would join with me in the prosecution? Not that I wanted, I said, an associate, but that I was not so jealous of my own glory, as to refuse to share it with them in this affair. She accordingly communicated this message to them, and they all agreed to the proposal without the least hesitation. It happened very opportunely, that the senate was to meet within three days. It was a general rule with me, to consult, in all my affairs, with Corellius, a person of the greatest prudence and wisdom this age has produced. However, in the present case, I relied entirely upon my own discretion, being apprehensive he would not approve of my design, as he was

* Our author's first wife; of whom we have no particular account. After her death, he married his favourite Calphurnia.

of a very indecisive and cautious temper. But although I did not previously deliberate with him, (experience having taught me, never to advise with a person concerning a question we have already determined, where he has a right to expect that one shall be decided by his judgment,) yet I could not forbear acquainting him with my resolution, at the time I proposed to carry it into execution. The senate being assembled, I came into the house, and begged I might have leave to make a motion; which I accordingly did in few words, and with general assent. When I began to touch upon the charge, and point out the person I intended to accuse, (though as yet without mentioning him by name,) I was attacked on all sides. "Let us know," says one, "who is the object of this extraordinary motion?" "Who is it," asked another, "that is thus accused, without acquainting the house with his name and his crime?" "Surely," added a third, "we, who have escaped the late dangerous times, may expect now, at least, to remain in security." I heard all this with great calmness, and without being in the least alarmed;—such is the effect of conscious integrity; and so much difference is there with respect to inspiring confidence or fear, whether the world had only rather one should forbear a certain act, or absolutely condemns it. It would be too tedious to relate all that was advanced, by different parties, upon this occasion. At length the consul acquainted me, that I was at liberty to propose what I thought proper, when my turn should come to give my opinion upon the order of

the day.* I thanked him for allowing me a liberty, which he never yet, I said, refused to any; and so sat down: when immediately the house went upon other business. In the mean while, one of my consular friends took me aside, and, with great earnestness, telling me, he thought I had proceeded in this matter with more courage than prudence, used every method of reproof and persuasion, to prevail with me to desist; adding, at the same time, that I should certainly, if I persevered, render myself obnoxious to some future prince. "And so be it," I returned, "should he prove a bad one." He had scarce left me, when a second came up: "For God's sake," said he, "what are you attempting? Why will you ruin yourself? Do you consider to what hazards you are exposed? Why will you presume too much on the present situation of public affairs, when it is so uncertain what turn they may hereafter take? You are attacking a man who is actually at the head of the treasury, and will shortly be consul. Besides, do you consider what credit he has, and with what powerful friendships he is supported?" Upon which he named a certain person, who (not without several unfavourable rumours)†

* It is very remarkable, that when any senator was asked his opinion in the house, concerning the business in agitation, he had the privilege of speaking as long as he pleased upon any other affair, before he delivered his sentiments on the point in question.—*Aul. Gell.* lib. iv. cap. 10.

† Probably concerning his intentions to employ his credit with the army, to be proclaimed emperor either immediately, or on the death of Nerva.

was then at the head of a powerful army in the East. I replied,

"All I've foreseen, and oft in thought revolv'd,"*

"and am willing, if fate shall so decree, to suffer by acting an honourable part, provided I can draw vengeance down upon a most infamous one." The time for the members to give their respective opinions was now arrived. Domitius Apollinaris, the consul elect, spoke first; after him, Fabricius Vejento; then Fabius Posthumius; Vectius Proculus next, (who married my wife's mother, and who was colleague of Publicius Certus, the person on whom the debate turned,) and, last of all, Ammius Flaccus. They all defended Certus, as if I had already accused him, (though I had not yet so much as once mentioned his name,) and entered upon his justification, as if I had exhibited a specific charge. It is not necessary to repeat, in this place, what they respectively said, having related it in their words, in the speech above mentioned. Avidius Quietus, and Cornutus Tertullius, answered them. The former observed, "that it was extremely unjust not to hear the complaints of those who thought themselves injured; and, therefore, that Arria and Fannia ought not to be denied the privilege of laying their grievances before the house; and that the point for the consideration of the senate, was not the rank of the person, but the merit of the cause." Then Cornutus rose up, and acquainted the house, "That, as he was appointed guardian to the daughter of Helvidius, by the con-

* Æneid, lib. 6. v. 105.

sals, upon the petition of her mother and her father-in-law, he thought himself obliged to fulfil the duty of his trust; in the execution of which, however, he would endeavour to set some bounds to his indignation, by following that great example of moderation which those excellent women* had set, who contented themselves with barely informing the senate of the cruelties which Certus committed, in order to carry on his infamous adulation; and, therefore, he would only move, that if a punishment due to a crime so notoriously known, should be remitted, that, at least, Certus might be branded with some mark of the displeasure of that august assembly." Sarrius Rufus spoke next, and, meaning to steer a kind of middle course, expressed himself with much ambiguity. "I am of opinion," said he, "that great injustice will be done to Certus, if he is not acquitted, (for I do not scruple to mention his name, since the friends of Arria and Fannia, as well as his own, have done so too,) nor, indeed, have we any occasion to be solicitous upon this account. We, who think well of the man, shall judge him with the same impartiality as the rest; but if he is innocent, as I hope he is, and shall be glad to find, I think this house may very justly deny the present motion, till some charge shall be proved against him." Thus, according to the respective order in which they were called upon,† they delivered their several opin-

* Arria and Fannia.

† In the early times of the republic, the consul began by asking the opinion of the prince of the senate, and the rest went on, each according to his age. Under the emperors, their will served as a

ions. When it came to my turn, I rose up, and using the same introduction to my speech as I have published in the defence, I replied to them severally. It is surprising with what an universal assent I was heard, even by those who, just before, were loudest against me: such a wonderful change was wrought, either by the importance of the affair, the eloquence of the speech, or the resolution of the advocate. After I had finished, Vejento attempted to reply; but the general clamour not permitting him to proceed, "I hope, conscript fathers,"* said he, "you will not oblige me to implore the assistance of the tribunes."† Immediately the tribune Murena cried out, "You have my leave, most illustrious Vejento, to go on." But still the clamour was renewed. In the interval, the consul ordered the house to divide, and, having counted the voices, dismissed the senate, leaving Vejento in the midst, still attempting to speak. He made great complaints of this affront, (as he called it,) applying the following lines of Homer to himself:

> Great perils, father, wait the unequal fight;
> Those younger champions will thy strength o'ercome.‡

There was scarce a man in the senate that did not

rule; for, as the prince presided in the senate, he demanded the opinion of him first, whom he thought fit to do that honour: however, he more usually began with the consuls.

* The appellation by which the senate was addressed.

† The tribunes were magistrates chosen at first out of the body of the commons, for the defence of their liberties, and to interpose in all grievances offered by their superiors. Their authority extended even to the deliberations of the senate.

‡ Diomed's speech to Nestor, advising him to retire from the field of battle. *Iliad.* iii. 102. POPE.

embrace and kiss me; and all strove who should applaud me most, for having, with the utmost hazard to myself, revived a custom so long disused, of freely consulting the senate upon affairs that concern the honour of the public: in a word, for having wiped off that reproach which was thrown upon it by the other orders in the state, "that the senators mutually favoured the members of their own body, while they were very severe in animadverting upon the rest of their fellow-citizens." All this was transacted in the absence of Certus, who kept out of the way, either because he suspected something of this nature was intended to be moved, or (as was said in his excuse) that he was really indisposed. Cæsar, however, did not refer the examination of this matter to the senate. But I succeeded, nevertheless, in my aim, another person being appointed instead of Certus to the consulship, while the election of his colleague to that office was confirmed. And thus, the wish with which I concluded my speech, was actually realized: "May he be obliged," said I, "to renounce under a virtuous prince,* that reward he received from an infamous one!"† Some time after, I recollected, as well as I could, the speech I delivered upon this occasion; to which I made some additions. It happened, (though, indeed, it had the appearance of being somewhat more than casual) that a few days after I had published this

* Nerva.

† Domitian; by whom he had been appointed consul elect, though he had not yet entered upon that office.

piece, Certus was taken ill and died. I was told, that his imagination continually represented me as a man that was pursuing him with a dagger. Whether there was any truth in this rumour, I will not venture to assert; but, for the sake of example, however, I wish it might gain credit. And now I have sent you a letter, which if you should think is as long as the defence you say you have read, you must impute it to yourself, for not being contented with such information as that piece could afford you. Farewell.

LETTER XIV.

TO TACITUS.

THOUGH you are by no means inclined to self-admiration, yet, be assured, none of my writings are more sincerely the undissembled dictates of my real thoughts, than those of which you are the subject. Whether, indeed, posterity will concern herself with either of us, I know not; but surely we deserve some small regard at least, I will not say upon account of our geniuses (that would be too vain a presumption,) but from our industry, our labours, and that high reverence we feel for her. Proceed we then, my friend, in the course we have entered, which, as it has conducted some to the brightest eminences of fame, so it has drawn forth many from silent obscurity into public notice and reputation. Farewell.

LETTER XV.

TO FALCO.

I RETIRED to my villa at Tuscum, with the hopes of passing my time here, at least, in my own way: but that is a privilege, I find, I am not to enjoy even here; so greatly am I interrupted with the importunate complaints and petitions of my tenants. I look over their accounts with more reluctance than I examine my own; for, to confess the truth, it is with great unwillingness I review even these. I am revising, however, some little orations; an employment which, after a length of time has intervened, is but of a very cold and unentertaining kind. In the mean while, my domestic affairs are neglected as much as if I were absent. Yet I sometimes so far act the part of a careful master of a family, as to mount my horse and ride about my farms, instead of taking my exercise in the *gestatio*.* As for you, I hope you will keep up your good old custom, and, in return for this account of my rural occupations, let us country folk know what is going forward in town. Farewell.

LETTER XVI.

TO MAMILIANUS.

IT is no wonder the chace you mention afforded you infinite pleasure, since "the number of

* See Book I. Letter 3, note.

the slain (to use your own historical expression) was not to be counted."* As for myself, I have neither leisure nor inclination for sports of that kind: not leisure, because I am in the midst of my vintage; nor inclination, because it has proved an extreme bad one this season. However, I shall be able, I hope, to *draw off* some new verses, at least, if not new wine, for your entertainment, which, since you request them in so agreeable a manner, I will not fail to send you, as soon as they shall be thoroughly *settled*. Farewell.

LETTER XVII.

TO GENITOR.

I HAVE received your letter, in which you complain of being highly disgusted, lately, at a very splendid entertainment, by a set of buffoons, mummers, and wanton prostitutes, who were playing their antic tricks† round the tables. But let me

* An expression frequent among the historians in their description of battles.

† These persons were introduced at most of the tables of the great, for the purposes of mirth and gaiety, and constituted an essential part in all polite entertainments among the Romans. It is surprising how soon this great people deviated from their original severity of manners, and were tainted with the contagion of foreign luxury. Livy dates the rise of this, and other unmanly delicacies, from the conquest of Scipio Asiaticus over Antiochus; that is, when the republic had scarcely subsisted above a hundred and fourscore years. "*Luxuriæ peregrinæ origo* (he observes) *exercitu Asiatico in urbem invecta est.*"—Liv. l. 39, c. 6. This triumphant army caught, it seems, the contaminating diversions of the people it subdued; and, at its return to Rome, scattered infection among their countrymen, which spread, by slow degrees, till it ef-

advise you to smooth your brow a little. It is true, I admit nothing of this kind at my own house; I endure them, however, without showing any dislike, when I meet with them in other people's. "And why then," you will be ready to ask, "not have them yourself?" Because the gestures of the wanton, the pleasantries of the buffoon, or the extravagancies of the mummer, give me no pleasure, as they give me no surprise. It is my particular taste, you see, not my judgment, that I plead against them. And, indeed, what numbers are there, who think the entertainments in which you and I most delight are no better than impertinent follies? How many are there, who, as soon as a reader, a lyrist, or a come-

fected their total destruction. Thus did eastern luxury revenge itself on Roman arms! It may be wondered, that Pliny should keep his own temper, and check the indignation of his friends, at a scene which was fit only for the dissolute revels of the infamous Trimalchio. But it will not, perhaps, be doing justice to our author, to take an estimate of his real sentiments upon this point from the letter before us.—Genitor, it seems, was a man of strict, but rather of too austere, morals for the free turn of the age: "*Emendatus et gravis: paulo etiam horridior et durior ut in hac licentia temporum.*"—Ep. 3. l. 3. But as there is a certain seasonable accommodation to the manners of the times, not only extremely consistent with, but highly conductive to, the interests of virtue, Pliny, probably, may affect a greater latitude than he in general approved, in order to draw off his friend from that stiffness and unyielding disposition, which might prejudice those of a gayer turn against him, and consequently lessen the beneficial influence of his virtues upon the world. A late most ingenious author, who has greatly distinguished himself in several branches of useful and polite literature, has given us a representation of one of these buffoons, from an antique in his collection; to which the reader is referred for a stronger idea of the vitiated and low taste of those, who could receive from them any gratification. See MIDDLETON, *Antiq.* tab. 9, fig. 2.

dian is introduced, either withdraw from the company, or, if they remain, show as much dislike to this kind of diversions, as you did at those *monsters*, as you call them! Let us bear, therefore, my friend, with others in their amusements, that they, in return, may show indulgence to ours. Farewell.

LETTER XVIII.

TO SABINUS.

WITH what care and attention you will read my works, and how perfectly treasure them in your memory, your letter is a sufficient proof. Do you consider, then, what trouble you are bringing upon your hands, when you kindly entice me, by every friendly artifice, to communicate to you as many of them as possible? I cannot, certainly, refuse your request; but shall comply with it, however, at different intervals, and observe some kind of regular succession. For, I would not, by too copious and too frequent a supply, over-burthen and confound a memory, to which I already owe so many acknowledgments; nor pour in upon it such a profusion at once, as to obliterate what it had before retained, in order to make room for what succeeds. Farewell.

LETTER XIX.

TO RUFO.

YOU have read, it seems, in a letter* of mine, that Virginius Rufus directed the following lines to be inscribed upon his tomb:

Here Rufus lies, who Vindex's arms withstood,
Not for himself, but for his country's good:

For which you blame him, and think Frontinus acted much more reasonably, in forbidding any monument whatsoever to be erected to his memory; and, in the conclusion of your letter, you desire my sentiments upon each. I loved them both; but I confess I admired *him* most whom you condemn; and admired him to such a degree, that, so far from imagining I ever should have occasion to become his advocate, I thought he could never be sufficiently applauded. In my opinion, every man who has acted a great and distinguished part, deserves, not only to be excused, but approved, if he endeavours to secure immortality to the fame he has merited, and is desirous also to perpetuate an everlasting remembrance of himself, by monumental inscriptions. Yet rarely shall you find a man, who had performed such great achievements, so modestly reserved upon the subject of his own actions, as Virginius was. I can bear him witness, (and I had the happiness to enjoy his intimate friendship,) that I never but once heard him mention his own con-

* To Albinus; see Book VI. Letter 10.

duct; and that was, in giving an account of a conversation which passed between him and Cluvius: "You well know," said Cluvius to him, "the fidelity required in an historian; you will pardon me, therefore, I hope, if you should meet with any thing in my works, that is not agreeable to you." "O Cluvius," he replied, "can you be ignorant, that what I performed was in order that every man might enjoy the liberty of writing what he pleased?" But let us compare Frontinus with him in that very instance, wherein you think the former discovered a more modest and unostentatious disposition. He forbade a monument to be erected to him, it is true, but in what words? "The expence of a monument," says he, "is superfluous; the remembrance of me will remain, if my actions deserve it." Is there less vanity, do you think, thus to proclaim to all the world* that his memory would remain, than to mark upon a single tomb-stone, in two lines, the actions one has performed? It is not, however, my design to condemn your favourite hero; I only mean to defend Virginius; and what argument can be more prevailing with you, than one drawn from a comparison between him and the person you prefer? In my own opinion, indeed, neither of them deserve to be condemned, since they both were animated with the same ardent passion for glory, although they pursued their object by different roads; the former, in desiring to receive those monumental honours he had merited; the latter, in seeming to despise them. Farewell.

* It appears from hence, that this was not a testamentary direction, but a declaration in some work which Frontinus had published.

LETTER XX.

TO VENATOR.

THE longer your letter was, so much the more agreeable I thought it; especially as it turned entirely upon my works. I am not at all surprised you should find a pleasure in them, since I know you have the same affection for every composition of mine, as you have for the author.

The getting in of my vintage, (which though it has proved but a slender one this season, is, however, more plentiful than I expected) particularly employs me at present. If, indeed, I can, with any propriety, say so, who only gather a grape now and then, visit the wine-press, taste the must in the vat, and saunter to my domestics;* who being all engaged without doors, have wholly abandoned me to my readers and my secretaries. Farewell.

LETTER XXI.

TO SABINIANUS.

YOUR freedman, whom you lately mentioned to me with displeasure, has been with me, and threw himself at my feet with as much submission as he could have fallen at yours. He earnestly requested me, with many tears, and even with all the

* The distinction in the civil law between the *servi Urbani & Rustici*, is alluded to in the original; but as we have not the same among us, it is not possible, perhaps, to preserve this allusion, with propriety, in an English translation.

eloquence of silent sorrow, to intercede for him; in short, he convinced me, by his whole behaviour, that he sincerely repents of his fault. I am persuaded he is thoroughly reformed, because he seems deeply sensible of his guilt. I know you are angry with him, and I know it is not without reason; but clemency can never exert itself more laudably than when there is the most cause for resentment. You once had an affection for this man, and I hope will have again: in the mean while, let me only prevail with you to pardon him. If he should incur your displeasure hereafter, you will have so much the stronger plea in excuse for your anger, as you show yourself the more exorable to him now. Concede something to his youth, to his tears, and to your own natural mildness of temper; do not make him uneasy any longer, and I will add, too, do not make yourself so; for a man of your benevolence of heart cannot be angry without feeling great uneasiness. I am afraid, were I to join my entreaties with his, I should seem rather to compel, than to request you to forgive him. Yet I will not scruple even to unite mine with his; and in so much the stronger terms, as I have very sharply and severely reproved him, positively threatening never to interpose again in his behalf. But though it was proper to say this to him, in order to make him more fearful of offending, I do not say so to you. I may, perhaps, again have occasion to entreat you upon his account, and again obtain your forgiveness; supposing, I mean, his fault should be such as may become me to intercede, and you to pardon. Farewell.

LETTER XXII.

TO SEVERUS.

I HAVE been much alarmed by the ill state of health of Passienus Paulus, as indeed I had many and just reasons. He has a most excellent and generous heart, of which I have the happiness to share the warmest friendship. In his writings he very successfully emulates the ancients, whose spirit and manner he has closely imitated, and happily restored; especially that of Propertius, to whom he is no less related by genius than by blood, as he particularly resembles that poet in his chief excellency. When you read his elegies, all that is elegant, tender, and pleasing, will conspire to charm you; and you will clearly discover they are animated with the congenial spirit of Propertius. He has lately made some attempts of the lyric kind, in which he as successfully copies the manner of Horace, as he has that of the other poet just mentioned. You would imagine, were there such a thing as kindred in genius, that the blood of Horace likewise flowed in his veins. He displays a most wonderful compass and pregnancy of imagination: when he describes the passion of love, you perceive his heart is entirely possessed by the most tender sentiments; when he paints the emotions of grief, you see his breast is penetrated with the deepest sorrow; when he enters upon topics of panegyric, it is with all the ardour of the warmest benevolence; when he diverts himself with subjects of pleasantry, it is in the spirit of the most

agreeable gaiety; in short, whatever kind of poetry he engages in, he executes it with such a masterly hand, that one would imagine it was the single species to which he had applied himself. The dangerous indisposition of such a friend and such a genius, occasioned as much anxiety to me, as it did pain to him. But at length *he* is recovered, and *my* peace is restored: an event which deserves your congratulation, not only for my sake, but for the sake of literature itself, which was exposed to as great a hazard by his danger, as it will receive glory by his recovery. Farewell.

LETTER XXIII.

TO MAXIMUS.

IT has frequently happened, when I have been pleading before the centumviri, that those venerable judges, after having preserved, as much as possible, the gravity and solemnity suitable to their character, have at length been forced, as it were, to break through all restraints, and have risen up, with one consent, in my applause. I have often, likewise, gained as much glory in the senate as my utmost wishes could desire; but I never felt a more sensible pleasure, than by an account which I lately received from Cornelius Tacitus. He informed me, that, at the last Circensian games, he sat next to a certain person, who, after much discourse had passed between them, upon various points of erudition, asked him if he was an Italian or a provincial? Tacitus replied, "Your acquaintance with literature

must have informed you who I am."—"Pray, then, is it Tacitus or Pliny I am talking with?" I cannot express how highly I am pleased to find, that our names are not so much the proper appellatives of men, as a kind of distinction for learning herself; and that eloquence renders us known to those, who would be ignorant of us by any other means. An accident of the same nature happened to me a few days ago. Fabius Rufinus, a person of distinguished merit, was placed next to me at table, and below him a countryman of his, who was just then come to Rome for the first time. Rufinus desired his friend to take notice of me, and entered into a conversation concerning the object of my studies: to whom the other immediately replied, "That it must undoubtedly then be Pliny." To own the truth, I look upon these instances as a very considerable recompence of my labours. Had Demosthenes reason to be pleased with the old woman of Athens exclaiming—"This is Demosthenes!"* and may I not be allowed to congratulate myself upon the extensive reputation my name has acquired? Yes, my friend, I will rejoice in it, and without scruple confess that I do. As I only mention the judgment of

* The story, as related by Tully, is this: Demosthenes met an old woman carrying a pail of water, upon which she whispers to her companion, "This is Demosthenes!" I must not, however, conceal from the reader, that Tully condemns the Grecian orator for being pleased upon this occasion, and accounts for it in the true spirit of genuine philosophy, "*apud alios loqui videlicet didicerat, non multum ipse secum.*"—Tusc. l. 5. He had learnt the art of talking to others, but was unacquainted, it seems, with the most instructive of all arts, the art of *self-converse*. A little of this home-philosophy would have taught him, in the judgment of Tully, to rate *vulgar* admiration at a lower value.

others, not my own, I am not afraid of incurring the censure of vanity;* especially from you, who, as

* Those who have formed their notions of *modesty* according to the false refinements in manners which latter times have introduced, will take offence, probably, at the advantageous terms in which Pliny here, and in some other passages of these letters, speaks of himself. But it will not be just to estimate our author's character by maxims which have been received in the world long since he left it. It is most certain, that modesty, according to the idea the ancients had of it, did not (neither in the truth of things does it) forbid a man to speak well of himself, where he has merit to support the character he claims. True modesty consisted only (as indeed it ought only to consist) in being *ashamed* to commit any thing base and unworthy; any thing unbecoming the dignity of human nature; any thing in defiance of that reverence we owe to ourselves, and to that rank we hold in the order of rational beings: she was, in short, the *custos virtutum omnium*, as Tully emphatically calls her, the guardian and protectress of the whole train of human virtues. Pliny, who often recommends *modesty* as one of the most shining virtues in others, could never have spoken thus favourably of his own merit, if it had been contrary to the received notions of that most amiable quality. And that it was not, is extremely evident from the whole tenor of antiquity in the article of self-commendation. Homer's Ulysses, (to borrow the observation of a very polite and judicious critic,) "calls himself the *wisest* of the Grecians, as his Achilles does not scruple to represent himself the *best and most valiant* of them; and that, too, in a council of all the princes: Virgil has given us his approbation of both the one and the other, in making Æneas talk frequently of his own piety and valour. Socrates, in Plato, is always brought in to his advantage; he himself quotes the oracle, which pronounced him to be the *wisest of men*. Xenophon represents Cyrus, upon his death-bed, as taking notice of the greatest beauty of his own character, his humanity, in a piece which every one knows was designed for the character of a perfect prince. Cæsar, and the great Jewish writer of his own life, frequently commend themselves: the greatest critic, as well as the greatest orator among the Romans, who so often reckons *modesty* among the things which are most necessary toward rendering a man great in his profession; how open and frequent is he in praising himself, and setting his own merit in a true light? But what

you envy no man's reputation, so you are particularly zealous for mine. Farewell.

LETTER XXIV.

TO SABINIANUS.

I GREATLY approve of your having, in compliance with my letter,* received again into your family and favour, a discarded freedman, whom you once admitted into a share of your affection. This placability will afford you, I doubt not, great satisfaction: it certainly, at least, has me, both as a proof that you are capable of being governed in your passion, and as an instance of your paying so much regard to me, as to yield either to my authority, or to my request. You will accept, therefore, at once, both of my applause and my thanks. At the same time, I must advise you to be disposed for the future to pardon the faults of your people, though there should be none to intercede in their behalf. Farewell.

LETTER XXV.

TO MAMILIANUS.

THOUGH you complain of the crowd of military occupations which press upon you, yet, as

puts this beyond dispute, (and shows, at the same time, that a just commendation of one's self may be very consistent with the greatest modesty,) is to be found in the sacred writings, in which Moses says of himself, that he was the *meekest man upon earth.*"—Essay on Pope's Odys. pt. 1. 52.

* See Let. 21. of this Book.

if you were enjoying the most uninterrupted leisure, you read and admire, it seems, my poetical trifles; and not a little encourage me to persevere in amusing compositions of that kind. I begin, indeed, to pursue this sort of study, not only with a view to my diversion, but my reputation, since they have approved themselves to the judgment of a man of your dignity and learning, and, what is more, of your sincerity. At present I have some business in the courts of law, which takes up a little of my time; but as soon as I shall have dispatched it, I will again trust my muse to your candid bosom. You will suffer my little doves and sparrows to take wing among your eagles,* if you should have the same good opinion of them as they have of themselves; if not, you will kindly confine them to their cage and their nests. Farewell.

LETTER XXVI.

TO LUPERCUS.

I SAID once (and I think not improperly) of a certain orator of the present age, whose compositions are extremely regular and correct, but by no means animated and sublime, "His only fault is, that he has none." Whereas he, who is possessed of the true spirit of oratory, should be bold and daring; should sometimes rise above the precise limits of common rules; and frequently soar even to dangerous heights; for danger is generally

* Alluding to the Roman standard, which was an eagle fixed upon the top of a spear.

near whatever is towering and exalted. The plain, 'tis true, affords a safer, but for that reason a more humble and inglorious path: they, who run, are more likely to stumble than they who creep; but the latter gain no honour by not slipping, while the former even fall with glory. It is with eloquence as with some other arts; she is never more pleasing than when she risks most. Have you not observed what acclamations our rope-dancers excite, at the instant of imminent danger? Whatever is most surprisingly hazardous, or, as the Greeks better express it, whatever is most *perilous*, most excites our admiration. The pilot's skill is by no means equally proved in a calm, as in a storm: in the former case, he tamely enters the port, unnoticed and unapplauded; but when the cordage cracks, the mast bends, and the rudder groans, then it is that he shines in all his glory, and is hailed as little inferior to a sea-god. The reason of making these observations is, because, if I mistake not, you have marked some passages in my writings for being tumid, exuberant, and over-wrought, which, in my estimation, are but adequate to the idea, or boldly sublime. It is material, therefore, to consider, whether your criticism turns upon such points as are real faults, or only striking and remarkable expressions. Whatever is elevated is sure to be observed; but it requires a very nice judgment to distinguish the bounds between true and false grandeur; between a just and enormous height. To give an instance out of Homer, both of the grand and elevated style, in the following lines, which can

scarcely, I imagine, have escaped any reader's observation:

> Heaven in loud thunder bids the trumpet sound;
> And wide beneath them groans the rending ground.*

Again,

> Reclined on clouds his steed and armour lay.†

So in this whole passage:

> As torrents roll, increased by numerous rills,
> With rage impetuous down their echoing hills,
> Rush to the vales, and, poured along the plain,
> Roar through a thousand channels to the main.‡

It requires, I say, a very delicate hand to poise these metaphors, and determine whether they are too figurative and pompous, or truly majestic and sublime. Not that I think any thing which I have written, or can write, admits of comparison with these. I am not extravagant enough to entertain

* Iliad xxi. 387, Pope's Trans.

† Iliad v. 356, speaking of Mars.

Iliad. 4. v. 452. Pope's Trans. It is with great judgment Pliny distinguishes between *grandeur* and *elevation*, which, though they are sometimes confounded, are most certainly distinct. Grandeur seems to consist entirely in the sentiment, and is the first of the five species of sublimity which Longinus has enumerated. (sect. 8.) The passage that admired critic quotes from the account which Moses gives of the creation, is of this kind: *God said, let there be light, and there was light.* Here is nothing in the expression ornamented or elevated; the language is plain and simple, yet conveys to the mind the noblest idea of Omnipotence, that the utmost efforts of the strongest imagination can conceive. But when a sublime thought is clothed (if I may so say) in all the graceful propriety of just figure, it then becomes elevated. The illustrations, which our author produces from Homer, are of this sort, where greatness of sentiment is heightened by beauty of imagery.

so proud an opinion: what I would be understood to contend for is, that we should throw up the reins to eloquence, nor curb the spirited exertions of genius by too much restraint. But it will be said, perhaps, there is a wide difference between orators and poets. As if Tully were not as bold in his figures as any of the poets! Not to mention particular instances from him, in an article concerning which, I imagine, there can be no dispute; does Demosthenes* himself, that model and standard of true oratory, does Demosthenes check and repress the fire of his indignation, in that well known passage which begins thus: "Ye infamous flatterers, ye evil genii," &c.?—And again, "It is neither with stones nor bricks that I have fortified this city," &c.—And afterwards; "I have *thrown* up these *out-works* before Attica, and pointed out to you all the resources which human prudence can suggest," &c.—And in another place; "O, my countrymen, I swear by the immortal gods, that he is *intoxicated* with the spirit of his own magnanimous actions," &c.—But what can be more daring and beautiful than that long digression, which begins in this manner: "A terrible disease, O my

* The design of Pliny, in this letter, is to justify the figurative expressions he had employed, probably in some oration, by instances of the same warmth of colouring, from those great masters of eloquence, Demosthenes and his rival Æschines. But the force of the passages which he produces from these orators, must necessarily be greatly weakened to a mere modern reader, some of them being only hinted at, as generally well known; and the metaphors, in several of the others, have either lost much of their original spirit and boldness, by being introduced and received in common language, or cannot, perhaps, be preserved in an English translation.

countrymen, has seized upon all Greece," &c. ?—The following passage, likewise, though somewhat shorter, is conceived in the same boldness of metaphor: "Then it was I rose up in opposition to the daring Pytho, who *poured forth a torrent* of menaces against you," &c.—The subsequent stricture is of the same stamp: "When a man has strengthened himself, as Philip has, by rapine and wickedness, upon the first pretence that offers, at the first impolitic step, be it ever so inconsiderable, *he bristles up his mane*, and seizes all," &c.—So, in the same style with the foregoing, is this: "*Railed off*, as it were, from the privileges of society, by the concurrent and just judgments of the three tribunals in the city."—And in the same place: "O Aristogiton! you have *betrayed* that mercy which used to be shown to offences of this nature, or rather, indeed, you have wholly *destroyed* it. In vain, then, would you flee for refuge to a *port*, which you have *shut up*, and *choked with piles*."—He had said before; "I am afraid, therefore, you should appear, in the judgment of some, to have *erected a public seminary* of faction: for there is a weakness in all wickedness, which renders it apt to betray itself!"—And a little lower: "I see none of these resources open to him; but all is *precipice*, *gulph*, and *profound abyss*."—And again: "Nor do I imagine that our ancestors instituted those courts of judicature, that men of his character should be *planted* there; but, on the contrary, *eradicated*, that none may emulate their evil actions."—And afterwards: "If he is then the *artificer* of every wickedness, if he openly makes it his *trade and traffic*," &c.—And

a thousand other passages which I might cite to the same purpose; not to mention those expressions which Æschines says, are not words, but *wonders*. You will tell me, perhaps, I have unwarily mentioned Æschines, since Demosthenes is condemned, even by him, for running into these figurative expressions. But observe, I entreat you, how far superior the former orator is to his criticizer, and superior, too, in the very passages to which he objects; for in others, the strength of his genius discovers itself; in those above quoted, the sublimity of it shines out. But does Æschines himself avoid that mode of rhetoric which he reproves in Demosthenes? "The orator," says he, "O ye Athenians, and the law, ought to *speak* the same language; but when the *voice* of the law declares one thing, and that of the orator another, we should give our vote to the justice of the law, not to the impudence of the orator."—And in another place: "He afterwards manifestly discovered the design he had, of concealing his fraud under cover of the decree, having expressly declared therein, that the ambassadors sent to the Oretæ gave the five talents, not to you, but to Callias. And that you may be convinced what I say is the truth, (after having *stripped* the decree of its *gallies*, its *trim*, and its arrogant ostentation,) read the clause itself."—And in another part: "Suffer him not to *break cover*, and *escape* out of the limits of the question."—A metaphor he is so fond of, that he repeats it again: "But remaining firm and confident in the assembly, *drive* him into the merits of the question, and observe well how he *doubles*."—Is his style more reserved and simple, when he says,

"But you are for-ever *wounding* our ears, and are more concerned in the success of your daily harangues, than for the salvation of the city."—What follows is conceived in a yet higher strain of figure: "Will you not expel this man as the common calamity of Greece? Will you not seize and punish this *pirate* of the state, who *sails* about in quest of favourable conjunctures," &c.—with many other passages of the like nature.

And now I expect you will make the same attacks upon certain expressions in this letter, as you did upon those I have been endeavouring to defend. The rudder that *groans*, and the pilot compared to a *sea god*, will not, I suppose, escape your criticism: for I perceive, while I am suing for indulgence to my former style, I have fallen into the same kind of figurative diction which you condemn. But attack them if you please, provided you will immediately appoint a day when we may meet to discuss these matters in person: you will then either teach *me* to be less daring, or I shall learn *you* to be more bold. Farewell.

LETTER XXVII.

TO LATERANUS.

I HAVE had many occasions to observe the power, the dignity, the majesty, and, I will add, too, even the *divine* efficacy there is in history; but I never met with so strong an instance of it as lately. An author had recited part of an historical performance, which he had drawn up with the utmost re-

gard to truth, reserving the remainder for another reading, when, behold! the friends of a certain person came to him, and earnestly conjured him not to recite the rest; so much were they ashamed to hear those actions repeated, which yet they did not blush to commit! The historian complied with their request, as he honourably might. Nevertheless, both the history and the action still remain, and will ever remain and be read. It will be read, too, with so much the greater curiosity, as the publication is delayed: for nothing raises the inquisitive disposition of mankind so much, as to defer its gratification. Farewell.

LETTER XXVIII.

TO ROMANUS.

YOUR letters have at length reached me, and I received three at once, all most elegantly written, and in the warmest spirit of friendship; in short, such as I had reason to expect from you, especially after having wished for them so long. In one, you enjoin me the very agreeable commission of forwarding your letters to that excellent lady, the virtuous Plotina:* I have forwarded them. In

* Plotina was consort to the emperor Trajan. Her virtues are celebrated by several historians; and our author draws a most amiable character of her in few words, in his noble panegyric upon that prince. (PLIN. *Paneg.* No. 83.) He represents her (and he could not give a higher idea of her merit) as worthy the choice of that excellent emperor; of a sanctity of manners worthy of ancient Rome; plain in her habit, modest in her equipage, and polite in her address. She greatly contributed, it is said, (*Eutrop.* L. 8.

the same letter you recommend to me Popilius Artemisius, and accordingly I have performed his request. You tell me, also, your vintage has proved extremely moderate. That complaint, notwithstanding we are separated by such distant countries, is common to us both. Your second letter informs me, that you are employed in dictating and writing upon a subject, wherein you have me strongly in view. I am much obliged to you, and should be more so, if you would give me the pleasure of reading your performance. It is but just, indeed, that, as I communicate to you all my compositions, you should suffer me to partake of yours, even though they should turn upon subjects which concern others. You promise me, in the close of this letter, that as soon as you shall be informed, with certainty, in what manner I intend to dispose of myself, you will make an elopement from your family, and immediately fly to me: I am already preparing certain chains for you, which, when I have you here, you will by no means be able to break. I learn from your third, that my oration in behalf of Clarius has been delivered to you, and that it appears more full than when you heard it pronounced. It is so, I confess; for I afterwards very considerably enlarged it. You mention having sent me another letter, which you say was written with peculiar consideration, and desire to know if I have

c. 6.) to the wise choice which Trajan made of a successor; and Adrian, in gratitude for her good offices to him in that election, dedicated a magnificent temple to her memory, at Nismes, in Languedoc, the remains of which are still to be seen. (MONTFAUC. *Diar.* p. 4.)

received it: I have not, but impatiently wait its arrival. In the mean while, write to me by every opportunity, and pay me for this delay with interest, which I shall compute at the highest rate: for tell me, can you expect I should acquit you upon cheaper terms? Farewell.

LETTER XXIX.

TO RUSTICUS.

AS it is better to excel in any single art, than to arrive only at mediocrity in several; so, a moderate skill in several is to be preferred, where one cannot attain to perfection in any. Upon this maxim it is, that I have attempted compositions of various sorts, as I could not expect to carry any particular one to its highest excelleney. I hope, therefore, when you read any performance of mine, you will consider it with that indulgence which is due to an author, who has not confined himself to a single subject, but has struck out into different kinds of composition. In every other sort of workmanship, the number pleads some excuse for the deficiences of the artist; and shall works of literature, the most difficult of all others, be tried by a severer law? But whilst I am bespeaking your candour, am I not bringing my gratitude in question? For, if you receive these last pieces with the same indulgence that you have all my former, I have more reasons to hope for your praise, than to sue for your pardon: your pardon, however, will be sufficient. Farewell.

LETTER XXX.

TO GEMINIUS.

YOU have frequently in conversation, and lately in a letter, commended your friend Nonius to me, for his great liberality to certain particular persons: I shall join with you in applauding him, if his bounty is not confined to those only whom you mention. I would have *him*, who desires to show himself influenced by a spirit of true generosity, be liberal to his country, his kindred, his relations, and his friends; his friends, I mean, in distress: not like those, who chiefly bestow their presents where there is the greatest ability to make returns. I do not look upon such men as parting with any thing of their own; on the contrary, I consider their bounties as only so many disguised baits thrown out with a design of catching the property of others. Much of the same character are those, who take from one man in order to bestow on another, and aim at a reputation for munificence by sordid means. The first and fundamental principle of genuine beneficence, is to be contented with one's own; and after that to cherish and embrace all the most indigent of every kind, in one comprehensive circle of general benevolence. If your friend observes this rule in its full extent, he is entirely to be commended; if he only partially pursues it, still he deserves (in a less degree indeed, however he deserves) praise: so uncommon is it to meet with an instance of generosity, even of the most imperfect kind! the lust

of avarice has so totally seized upon mankind, that their wealth seems rather to possess them, than they to possess their wealth. Farewell.

LETTER XXXI.

TO SARDUS.

I STILL continued to enjoy your company, even after we had parted; for I entertained myself with reading your book. And I frequently perused, with particular complacency, (I honestly own it,) those passages of which I am the subject: a subject upon which, indeed, you have been extremely copious. With what a variety of expression, and in how many different lights, have you placed the same sentiments concerning the same person? Will you suffer me to mingle my applauses with my acknowledgments? I can do neither sufficiently; and if I could, there would be somewhat, I fear, of vanity, in making that person the subject of my praise, which is, in truth, the object of my thanks. I will only add, then, that I thought your compliments to me raised the merit of your performance; as the merit of your performance heightened the pleasure of your compliments. Farewell.

LETTER XXXII.

TO TITIANUS.

WHAT are you doing? And what do you propose to do? As for myself, I pass my life in the

most agreeable, that is, in the most disengaged manner imaginable. I do not find myself, therefore, in the humour to write a long letter, though I am to read one. I am too much a man of indolence for the former, and just idle enough for the latter: for none are more indolent, you know, than your fine gentlemen, or have more curiosity than those who have nothing to do. Farewell.

LETTER XXXIII.

TO CANINIUS.

I HAVE met with a story, which, though it is authenticated by undoubted evidence, has all the air of fable, and would afford a very proper subject for the exercise of your truly poetical and sublime genius. It was related to me, the other day, at table, where the conversation happened to turn upon various kinds of extraordinary events. The person who gave the account was a man of unsuspected veracity:—but what has a poet to do with truth? However, you might venture to rely upon his testimony, even though you had the character of a faithful historian to support. There is in Africa a town called Hippo, situated not far from the sea-coast: it stands upon a navigable lake, from whence a river runs into the main ocean, and ebbs and flows with the sea. Persons of all ages divert themselves here with fishing, sailing, or swimming; especially boys, whom love of play and idleness bring thither. The contest among them is, who shall have the glory of swimming farthest;

and he that leaves the shore and his companions at the greatest distance, gains the victory. It happened, in one of these trials of skill, that a certain boy, more bold than the rest, launched out towards the opposite shore. He was met by a dolphin,* who sometimes swam before him, and sometimes behind him, then played round him, and at last took him upon his back, then set him down, and afterwards took him up again; and thus he carried the poor frighted boy out into the deepest part; when immediately he turns back again to the shore, and lands him among his companions. The fame of this remarkable event spread through the town, and crowds of people flocked round the boy (whom they viewed as a kind of prodigy,) to ask him questions, and hear him relate the story. The next day the shore was lined with multitudes of spectators, all attentively contemplating the ocean, and (what indeed is almost itself an ocean) the lake. In the mean while, the boys swam as usual, and, among the rest, the youth I am speaking of went into the lake, but with more caution than before. The dolphin again appeared, and came to the boy, who, together with his companions, swam away with the utmost precipitation. The dolphin, as it were, to invite and recal them, leaped and dived up and down, darting about in a thousand different convolutions. This he practised for several days together, till the people (accus-

* This animal is celebrated by several of the ancients for its philanthropy; and Pliny the elder, in particular, relates this very story, among other instances, in confirmation of that notion. See PLIN. *Hist. Nat.* l. 9. c. 8.

tomed from their infancy to the sea,) began to be ashamed of their timidity. They ventured, therefore, to advance nearer, playing with him, and calling him to them; while he, in return, suffered himself to be touched and stroked. Use rendered them more courageous: the boy, in particular, who first had experienced the safety, swam by the side of him, and leaping upon his back, was carried about in that manner: thus they gradually became acquainted and delighted with each other. There seemed now, indeed, to be no fear on either side, the confidence of the one, and tameness of the other, mutually increasing; the rest of the boys, in the mean while, surrounding and encouraging their companion. It is very remarkable, that this dolphin was followed by a second, which seemed only as a spectator and attendant on the former; for he did not at all submit to the same familiarities as the first, but only conducted him backwards and forwards, as the boys did their comrade. But what is farther surprising, and no less true than that which I have already related, is, this dolphin, who thus played with the boys, and carried them upon his back, would come upon the shore, dry himself in the sand, and, as soon as he grew warm, roll back into the sea. Octavius Avitus, deputy-governor of the province, actuated by an absurd piece of superstition, poured some precious ointment* over him as he lay on the

* It was a religious ceremony practised by the ancients, to pour precious ointments upon the statues of their gods: Avitus, it is probable, imagined this dolphin was some sea divinity, and therefore expressed his veneration of him, by the solemnity of a sacred unction.

shore; the novelty and smell of which made him retire into the ocean, and it was not till after several days that he was seen again, when he appeared dull and languid; however, he recovered his strength, and continued his usual playful tricks. All the magistrates round the country flocked hither to view this sight; the entertainment of whom, upon their arrival, and during their stay, was an additional expence, which the slender finances of this little community would ill afford; besides, that the quiet and retirement of the place was utterly destroyed. It was thought proper, therefore, to remove the occasion of this concourse, by privately killing the poor dolphin. And now, with what a flow of tenderness will you describe this affecting catastrophe!* and how will your genius adorn and improve the interesting story! Though,

* The overflowing humanity of Pliny's temper breaks out upon all occasions, but he discovers it in nothing more strongly than by the impression which this little story appears to have made upon him. True benevolence, indeed, extends itself through the whole compass of existence, and sympathises with the distress of every creature capable of sensation. Little minds may be apt to consider a compassion of this inferior kind, as an instance of weakness; but it is undoubtedly the evidence of a noble nature. Homer thought it not unbecoming the character even of a hero, to melt into tears at a distress of this sort, and has given us a most amiable and affecting picture of Ulysses weeping over his faithful dog Argus, when he expires at his feet:

——— αυταρ ο νοσφιν ιδων απομοξατο δακρυ.
Ρεια λαθων Ευμαιον ———

Soft pity touched the mighty master's soul;
Adown his cheek the tear unbidden stole,
Stole unperceived; he turned his head, and dried
The drop humane. ——— *Odys.* xvii. POPE.

indeed, the subject does not require any fictitious embellishments; it will be sufficient to describe the fact in all its real circumstances. Farewell.

LETTER XXXIV.

TO TRANQUILLUS.

ASSIST me in settling my doubts. I have not, I am told, a good manner of reading verses: as my talent lies chiefly in reciting orations, I succeed so much the worse, it seems, in poetry. I design, therefore, as I am engaged to recite some poems to my particular friends, to make use of my freedman for that purpose. It is an instance, I own, of my treating them with little ceremony, that I assign this business to a person who is himself not very expert in it. However, he will perform, I am sure, better than I can, provided his fears do not disconcert him; for he is as novel a reader as I am a poet. Now the question is, how it becomes me to behave while he is discharging my office; shall I sit in a fixed and indolent posture, or follow him as he pronounces, with my looks, hands, and a low tone of applause, in the manner of a certain person whom you know? But I am apprehensive I can appropriate my gestures* no better than I can

* In the original it is called *saltatio*, which means a motion of the hands, accommodated either to one's own, or another's elocution. Our language does not supply a proper word for this gesture, as indeed we have too little occasion to find the want of it; the *chironomic* art, so much studied by the ancients, being in the number of those which have been long since lost. But if the *indoctæ rusticæve manus*, (Quinctilian) the awkward and unmeaning dispo-

read. I repeat it again, therefore, you must extricate me out of this difficulty, and tell me truly, whether you think it more excusable to read ill, than to practise or omit any of the circumstances above-mentioned. Farewell.

LETTER XXXV.

TO APPIUS.

I HAVE received your book, and return you my thanks, but am at present too much engaged to have time to read it; which, however, I impatiently wish to do. I have that high reverence for literature in general, and for your compositions in particular, that I think it a sort of profanation to approach them but with a mind entirely disengaged. I extremely approve of your care in revising your works; but remember, correctness has its limits: too much polishing rather weakens than strengthens. Besides, this excessive delicacy, while it ob-

sition of the hands, would have spoiled the noblest speech at Rome or Athens, that Tully or Demosthenes, in all the warmth of their enlivening eloquence, ever delivered, it would not, perhaps, be time ill employed, if our modern orators would give a little more attention to the graceful management of those essential instruments of affecting elocution. This becoming art, so far as it was connected with masculine oratory, Pliny, most certainly, could not but be well skilled in: it is probable, therefore, what he says, in this place, alludes to this *affected manner* which certain authors of his time had fallen into, when they attended the rehearsal of their own works; and that the whole turn of this epistle is ironical. This conjecture seems supported, not only by the subject of the letter, which is scarce of importance enough to bear a serious enquiry; but also by the expression he sets out with, viz. *Explica gestum meum*, which seems to be of the ludicrous kind.

structs other pursuits, not only prevents any new attempts, but does not finish even what it has begun. Farewell.

LETTER XXXVI.

TO FUSCUS.

YOU desire to know in what manner I dispose of my time in my summer villa at Tuscum? I rise just when I find myself in the humour, though generally with the sun; sometimes indeed sooner, but seldom later. When I am up, I continue to keep the shutters of my chamber windows closed; as darkness and silence wonderfully promote meditation. Thus, free and abstracted from those outward objects which dissipate attention, I am left to my own thoughts; nor suffer my mind to wander with my eyes, but keep my eyes in subjection to my mind: by these means they are not distracted with a multiplicity of external objects, and see nothing but what the imagination represents to them. If I have any composition upon my hands, this is the time I choose to consider it, not only with respect to the general plan, but even the style and expression, which I revise and correct as if I were actually writing. In this manner, I compose more or less as the subject is more or less difficult, and I find my memory able to retain it. I then call my secretary, and, opening the shutters, dictate to him what I have composed; after which I dismiss him for a little while, and then call him in again. About ten or eleven of the clock,

(for I do not observe one fixed hour,) according as the weather proves, I either walk upon my terrace, or in the covered portico; and there I continue to meditate or dictate what remains upon the subject in which I happen to be engaged. From thence I get into my chariot, where I employ myself as before, when I was walking, or in my study; and find this changing of the scene refreshes and enlivens my attention. At my return, I repose myself; then take a walk, and after that, repeat aloud some Greek or Latin oration, not so much for the sake of strengthening my voice* as my digestion; though indeed the power of the voice at the same time is improved by this practice. I then walk again, am anointed, take my exercises, and go into the bath. At supper, if I have only my wife, or a few friends with me, some author is read to us; and, after supper, we are entertained either with music, or an interlude. When that is finished, I take my walk with my family, in the number of which I am not without some persons of literature. Thus we pass our evenings in various conversation; and the day, even when it is at the longest, steals imperceptibly away. Upon some occasions, I change the order in certain of the articles above-mentioned. For instance, if I have studied longer, or walked more than usual, after my second sleep, and reading an

* By the regimen which Pliny here follows, one would imagine, if he had not told us who were his physicians, that the celebrated Celsus was in the number. That author expressly recommends reading aloud, and afterwards walking, as beneficial in disorders of the stomach; "*Si quis stomacho laborat, legere clare debet; post lectionem ambulare,*" &c. CELSI *Medic.* L. 1. c. 8.

oration or two aloud, instead of using my chariot, I get on horseback; by which means I take as much exercise, and lose less time. The visits of my friends from the neighbouring villages claim some part of the day; and sometimes, by an agreeable interruption, they come in very seasonably to relieve me, when I am fatigued. I now and then amuse myself with sporting, but always take my tablets into the field, that if I should not meet with game, I may at least bring home something.* Part of my time, too, is allotted to my tenants, though indeed not so much of it as they desire: and I return from settling their rustic controversies, with a better relish to my studies and more elegant occupations. Farewell.

LETTER XXXVII.

TO PAULINUS.

AS you are not of a disposition to expect from your friends, the common ceremonies of the world, when they cannot observe them without inconvenience to themselves; so I too warmly love you to be apprehensive you will take it unkind, my not waiting upon you on the first day of your entrance upon the consular office; especially as I am detained here by the necessity of letting my farms upon long leases. I am obliged to enter upon an entire new plan with my tenants; for, under the former leases, though I made them very considerable abatements, they have run greatly in arrear.

* See Book I. Letter 6, and the note there.

For this reason, several of them have not only taken no sort of care to lessen a debt, which they found themselves incapable of wholly discharging; but even seized and consumed all the produce of the lands, in the belief that it would now be no advantage to themselves to spare it. I must, therefore, obviate this increasing evil, and endeavour to find out some remedy against it. The only one I can think of is, not to reserve my rent in money, but in kind, and so place some of my servants to overlook the tillage, and guard the stock; as indeed there is no sort of revenue more agreeable to reason, than what arises from the bounty of the soil, the seasons, and the climate. 'Tis true, this method will require great integrity and diligent attendance in the person I appoint my bailiff, and put me to the expence of employing many hands. However, I must hazard the experiment; and, as in an inveterate distemper, try every change of regimen. You see, it is not any pleasurable indulgence that prevents my attending you on the first day of your consulship. I shall celebrate it, nevertheless, with as much festivity as if I were present, and pay my vows for you here, with sentiments of the warmest joy and congratulation. Farewell.

LETTER XXXVIII.

TO SATERNINUS.

YES, I sincerely applaud your friend Rufus; not because you desire me, but because I think he highly merits approbation. I have perused his very

finished performance; to which, though my affection for the author added a considerable recommendation, yet it did not blind my judgment; for the malicious critic is not, I trust, the only judicious reader. Farewell.

LETTER XXXIX.

TO MUSTIUS.

IN compliance with the advice of the Aruspices,* I intend to rebuild and enlarge the temple of Ceres, which stands upon my estate. It is indeed a very ancient fabric, and though extremely small, yet, upon a certain stated anniversary, is much frequented. On the 13th of September, great numbers of people, from all the country round, assemble there; at which time many affairs are transacted, and many vows paid and offered; but there is no shelter for them against the inclemency of the weather. I think, therefore, I shall perform an act both of piety and munificence, if, at the same time that I build a beautiful temple, I add to it a spacious portico; the first for the service of the goddess, the other for the use of the people. I beg you to purchase for me four marble pillars, of whatever kind you shall think proper; as also a quantity of marble for laying the floor, and incrusting the walls. You must likewise either buy a statue of the goddess, or procure one to be made,

* The business of the Aruspices was to examine the beasts which were offered in sacrifice, and from thence to foretel the success of any enterprise.

for age has maimed, in some parts, the ancient one of wood which stands there at present. With respect to the portico, I do not recollect there is any thing you can send me that will be serviceable; unless you will sketch me out a plan suitable to the situation of the place. It is not practicable to build it round the temple, because it is encompassed on one side by the river, whose banks are exceedingly steep; and on the other, by the high road. Beyond this road lies a very large meadow, in which the portico may be conveniently enough placed, opposite to the temple; unless you, who know so well how to conquer by art the inconveniences of nature, can propose some better plan. Farewell.

LETTER XL.

TO FUSCUS.

YOU are much pleased, I find, with the account I gave you in my former letter,* of the manner in which I spend the summer season at Tuscum; and desire to know what alteration I make in my method, when I am at Laurentinum in the winter? None, except abridging myself of my sleep at noon, and employing several hours both before day-light and after sun-set in study: but if any public business requires my early attendance at Rome, (which in winter very frequently happens,) instead of having interludes or music after supper, I meditate upon what I have previously dictated,

* See Letter 36. of this Book, p. 170.

and by often revising it in my own mind, fix it the more strongly in my memory. Thus I have given you a general sketch of my mode of life, both in summer and winter; to which you may add the intermediate seasons of spring and autumn: in these, as no part of the day is lost in sleep or dissipation, as in summer, so some time is gained for business or study by the nights being shorter than in winter. Farewell.

THE LETTERS OF PLINY.

BOOK TENTH.

CONTAINING THE LETTERS OF PLINY TO TRAJAN, AND OF TRAJAN TO PLINY.

LETTER I.*

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

THE pious affection you bore, most sacred emperor, to your august father, induced you to wish it might be late ere you succeeded him. But the

* The greater part of the following letters were written by Pliny, during his administration in the province of Bithynia. They are of a style and character extremely different from those in the preceding collection; whence some critics have injudiciously inferred, that they are the production of another hand; not considering that the occasion necessarily required a different *manner*. In letters of business, as these chiefly are, *turn* and *sentiment* would be foreign and impertinent; politeness and elegance of expression being the essentials that constitute perfection in this kind: and in that view, though they may be less entertaining, they have not less merit than the former. But besides their particular excellence as letters, they have a farther recommendation, as so many valuable pieces of history, by throwing a strong light upon the character of one of the most amiable and glorious princes in the Roman annals. Trajan appears, throughout, in the most striking attitude that a sovereign can be placed; in the exertion of power to the godlike purposes of justice and benevolence: and what one of the ancient historians has said of him is here eminently verified, that "*he rather chose to be loved than flattered by his people.*" To have

immortal gods thought proper to hasten the advancement of those virtues to the helm of the commonwealth, which had already so successfully shared in the steerage.* May *you*, then, and the world through your means, enjoy every prosperity worthy of your reign; to which let me add my wishes, most excellent emperor, upon a private as well as public account, that your health and spirits may be preserved firm and unbroken.

LETTER II.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

YOU have occasioned me, sir,† an inexpressible pleasure, by deeming me worthy of enjoying

been distinguished by the favour and friendship of a monarch of so exalted a character, is an honour that reflects the brightest lustre upon our author; as to have been served and celebrated by a minister of Pliny's genius and virtues, is the noblest monument of glory that could have been raised to Trajan.

* Nerva, who succeeded Domitian, reigned but sixteen months and a few days. Before his death, he not only adopted Trajan, and named him for his successor, but actually admitted him into a share of the government; giving him the titles of *Cæsar, Germanicus*, and *Imperator*. Vid. PLIN. *Paneg.*

† The translator has ventured to render the appellative *Dominus* by that of *Sir*, not because he is satisfied with the strict propriety of the title, but as thinking it less exceptionable than any other our language affords. That Pliny could not intend it as a title of royalty, seems evident from several passages in his panegyric, where, whenever he uses it in that sense, he constantly includes it in a notion of tyranny. (Vid. *Paneg.* XLV. No. 4. LV. No. 7. LXXXV. No. 1.) Accordingly, we find Augustus refusing the title of *Dominus*, as conveying an odious idea: "*Ut maledictum et opprobrium semper exhorruit.*"—SUET. *in Aug.* c. 53. Re-

the privilege which the laws confer on those who have three children. For, although it was from an indulgence to the request of the very worthy Servilianus, distinguished by his affectionate attachment to your person, that you granted this favour; yet I have the satisfaction to find, by the words of your rescript, that you complied the more willingly, as his application was in my behalf. I cannot but look upon myself as in possession of my utmost wish, after having thus received, at the entrance of your auspicious government, so distinguishing a mark of your peculiar regard; at the same time, that it considerably heightens my desire of leaving a family behind me. I was not entirely without this desire, even in the late most wretched times,* as my two marriages will induce you to believe; but the gods decreed it better, by reserving every valuable privilege to the bounty of your generous dispensations. And indeed the satisfaction of being a father will be so much the greater to me *now*, that I can look forward to the enjoyment of that felicity in the full security of public freedom.

sides, the high style of royalty would ill suit with that air of freedom and equality, which so remarkably distinguishes these letters of Pliny to Trajan; and the graceful simplicity of the Roman consul's address would be lost in the servile forms of a modern courtier. But it appears, from a passage in Seneca, that the Romans used the word *Dominus* as a general title of respect: "*Obvios, si nomen non succurrit,* Dominos *appellamus.*"—SEN. *Ep.* 3. And in that lower sense Pliny, it should seem, here employs it.

* Alluding to the execrable reign of Domitian.

LETTER III.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

THE experience, most excellent emperor, I have had of your unbounded generosity to me, in my own person, encourages me to hope I may be yet farther obliged to it, in that of my friends. Voconius Romanus (who was my inseparable companion and chamber-fellow at school) claims the first rank in that number; in consequence of which, I petitioned your sacred father to promote him to the dignity of the senatorial order. But the completion of my request is reserved to your goodness; for his mother had not then advanced, in the manner the law directs, the four hundred thousand sesterces,*

* In the original it is *sestertii quadringinties*, that is, about L. 320,000 sterling; a sum so immoderate, that the commentators have suspected, (and with great reason) some error must have crept into the text. Buchnerus and Gronovius imagine it should be read *quaterdecies* or *quadragies*; but this seems to be still carrying it much too high. The *census senatorius*, or the estate requisite to qualify a man to be a member of the senate, was, after different regulations, settled at length by Augustus at 1,200,000 sesterces, equal to about L. 9600 of our money. It probably stood thus in Pliny's time; for as it appears by the 19th letter of the first book, that the *census equistris* was 400,000 sesterces, which is just the sum we find it at in the reign of Augustus; so it will not, perhaps, be unreasonable to infer from thence, that the *census senatorius* had not yet undergone any alteration since the time of that emperor, as they seem to have borne a certain proportion to each other. For these reasons, therefore, both the common reading, and the emendation of the above-mentioned critics, is rejected in the translation, and the conjecture of a late editor (Gesnerus) adopted, who supposes it might be *quadringentorum millium*

which she engaged to give him, in her letter to the late emperor your father: this promise, however, by my advice, she has since performed, having conveyed to him a sufficient estate in land, with all the necessary formalities. The difficulties, therefore, being removed which deferred the gratification of our wishes, it is with full confidence I venture to assure you of the merit of my friend Romanus, heightened and adorned as it is, not only by the liberal and polite arts, but by his extraordinary tenderness to his parents. It is to that virtue he owes the present liberality of his mother, as well as his immediate succession* to his late father's estate, and also his having been adopted by his father-in-law. To these personal qualifications, the wealth and rank of his family gave an increase of lustre; and I persuade myself it will be some additional recommendation, that I am a solicitor in his behalf. Let me then entreat you, sir, to enable me to congratulate Romanus on so desireable an occasion; and at the same time to indulge an earnest, and I hope laudable ambition, of having it in my power to boast, that your favourable regards are extended, not only to myself, but to my friend.

400,000 sesterces, or about L. 3200 of our money. It has been questioned, whether by this *census senatorius* we are to understand the yearly income of the estate, or only the entire value of it; but the most generally received opinion is, that it means the latter, including both real and personal.

* Meaning, perhaps, that though he was under age when his father died, yet he had so much confidence in the prudence of Romanus, that he did not appoint him, as usual, a guardian by his will, but left him to the immediate possession of his estate.

LETTER IV. [XX.]*

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

WHEN by your gracious indulgence, sir, I was appointed to preside at the treasury† of Saturn,

* *N. B.* The following letters to the 30th are not ranged in the same order as they are placed in any of the Latin editions; the translator having taken the liberty of changing their situation, for the sake of bringing some letters together which throw a light upon each other. The figures included between this mark [ ] refer to the order in which they commonly stand.

† The public treasure was kept in the temple of Saturn, where the spoils of the conquered nations were deposited. Julius Cæsar seized upon this temple in the time of the civil war; and what an immense wealth that plunder threw into his hands, may be judged by the elegant description which Lucan gives of the riches it contained:

——— *tunc conditus imo*
Eruitur templis, multis intactus ab annis
Romani census populi, &c. LUCAN. iii. 155.

At length the sacred storehouse open laid,
The hoarded wealth of ages past displayed:
There might be seen the sums proud Carthage sent,
Her long impending ruin to prevent;
There heaped the Macedonian treasures shone,
What great Flaminius and Æmilius won
From vanquished Philip, and his hapless son;
There lay what flying Pyrrhus lost, the gold
Scorned by the patriot's* honesty of old;
Whate'er our parsimonious sires could save,
What tributary gifts rich Syria gave,
The hundred Cretan cities' ample spoil,
What Cato gathered from the Cyprian isle;
Riches of captive kings by Pompey borne

* Fabricius.

I immediately renounced all engagements of the bar, (as, indeed, I never blended business of that kind with the functions of the state,) that no avocations might call off my attention from the duties of that post to which I was promoted. For this reason, when the province of Africa petitioned the senate, that I might be permitted to undertake their cause against Marius Priscus, I excused myself from that office; and accordingly my excuse was allowed. But when, afterwards, the consul elect proposed, that the senate should apply to us again, and endeavour to prevail with us to yield to its inclinations, and suffer our names to be thrown into the urn;* I thought it most suitable to that tranquillity and good order which so happily distinguishes your

> In happier days his triumph to adorn,
> From utmost India, and the rising morn;
> Wealth infinite! ROWE.

Pliny the elder has given a particular valuation of this treasure which Cæsar seized, both in gold, and silver plate, and in coin; (*Hist. Nat.* l. 33, c. 3.) the amount of which, according to Dr. Arbuthnot's computation, is, L. 1,093,979 3s. 4d. But if there is no mistake in these sums, Cæsar did not take away by far so much as he brought in; for Plutarch relates, (*In Vit. Cæsar.*) that he placed at one time in the treasury 65,000 talents; which, according to the same ingenious author's calculation, is equivalent to 12,593,750 pounds. *Arb. Tab.* 191.

* Other senators, as well as Pliny, had excused themselves, it seems, from undertaking the management of this cause; it was proposed therefore, that they should cast lots; which is the meaning of "suffering their names to be thrown into an urn;" an urn being made use of in decisions of this kind. Accordingly, the lot fell upon our author, and his great friend the famous Cornelius Tacitus. See Book II. Letter 11, where there is a full account of this trial.

times, not to oppose (especially in so reasonable an article) the will of that august assembly. And, as I am desirous that all my words and actions may receive the sanction of your examplary virtue, I hope you will approve of my compliance.

LETTER V. [xxi.]

THE EMPEROR TRAJAN TO PLINY.

YOU acted as became a good citizen and a worthy senator, by paying obedience to the just requisition of that august assembly: and I have *full* confidence you will faithfully discharge the business you have undertaken.

LETTER VI. [iv.]

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

HAVING been attacked last year by a severe and dangerous illness, I employed a physician,* whose care and diligence, sir, I cannot sufficiently reward, but by your gracious assistance. I entreat you, therefore, to make him a denizen† of Rome;

* The physicians among the ancients were distinguished according to the particular branch of practice to which they confined themselves. The physician here mentioned, Pliny calls *Iatraliptes*, that is, one who applied external unctions.

† There was a difference between the *Jus Civitatis* and the *Jus Quiritium*; the former not extending to the same privileges as the latter, which comprehended whatever advantages a free native of Rome was entitled to: just in the same manner as with us there is a distinction between denization and naturalization.

for, as he is the freedman of a foreigner, he is, consequently, himself also a foreigner. His name is Harpocras: his patroness (who has been dead a considerable time) was Thermuthis, the daughter of Theon. I farther entreat you to bestow the full privileges of a Roman citizen upon Helia and Antonia Harmeris, the freedwomen of Antonia Maximilla, a lady of great merit. It is at her desire* I make this request.

LETTER VII. [xxii.]

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

I RETURN you thanks, sir, for your ready compliance with my desire, in granting the complete privileges of a Roman to the freedwomen of a lady to whom I am allied; and also for making Harpocras, my physician, a denizen of Rome. But when, agreeably to your directions, I gave in an account of his age and estate, I was informed by those who are better skilled in these affairs than I pretend to be, that, as he is an Egyptian, I ought to have previously obtained for him the freedom of Alexandria, before he was made free of Rome. I confess, indeed, that as I was ignorant of any difference in this case between those of Egypt†

* Pliny mentions his request to be at the particular desire of Maximilla, because nothing of this kind could legally be granted to a freedman without the consent of his patron; a name which was given to the master of a slave whom he had emancipated.

† Upon what occasion the honour of this peculiar distinction was granted in favour of Alexandria, does not appear; possibly it might be in gratitude to a country to which the Romans were

and other countries, I contented myself with only acquainting you, that he had manumized by a fore ignlady, long since deceased. However, it is an ignorance I cannot regret, since it affords me an opportunity of receiving from you a double obligation in favour of the same person. That I may legally, therefore, enjoy the benefit of your goodness, I beg you would be pleased to grant him the freedom of the city of Alexandria, as well as that of Rome. And that your gracious intentions may not meet with any farther obstacles, I have taken care, as you directed, to send an account to your freedman of his age and possessions.

LETTER VIII. [xxiii.]

THE EMPEROR TRAJAN TO PLINY.

IT is my resolution, in pursuance of the maxim observed by the princes my predecessors, to be extremely cautious in granting the freedom of the city of Alexandria; however, since you have obtained from me the freedom of Rome for your physician Harpocras, I cannot refuse you this other request. You must let me know to what district he belongs, that I may give you a letter to my good friend Pompeius Planta, governor of Egypt.

so highly obliged, being supplied with the greatest part of their corn from Egypt. This city, founded by Alexander the Great, was esteemed the most considerable in the world, next to that of Rome. It is now called *Scanderick*.

LETTER IX. [v.]

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

I CANNOT express, sir, the pleasure your letter gave me, by which I am informed that you have made my physician Harpocras a denizen of Alexandria; notwithstanding your resolution to follow the maxim of your predecessors in this point, by being extremely cautious in granting that privilege. Agreeably to your directions, I acquaint you, that Harpocras belongs to the district of Memphis.* I entreat you, then, most gracious emperor, to send me, as you promised, a letter to your good friend Pompeius Planta, governor of Egypt.

As I purpose (in order to have the earliest enjoyment of your presence, so ardently wished for here) to go to meet you, I beg, sir, you would permit me to extend my journey as far as possible.

LETTER X. [vi.]

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

IN my late indisposition, I was greatly obliged, sir, to Posthumius Marinus, my physician; and I cannot make him a suitable return, but by the assistance of your gracious indulgence. I entreat you, then, to make Chrysippus Mithridates, and his wife Stratonica, (who are related to Marinus,) denizens of Rome. I implore, likewise, the same priv-

* One of the four governments of Lower Egypt.

ilege in favour of Epigonus and Mithridates, the two sons of Chrysippus; but with this restriction,* that they may remain under the dominion of their father, and yet preserve their right of patronage over their own freedmen. I farther entreat you to grant the full privileges of a Roman citizen to L. Satrius Abascantius, P. Cæsius Phosphorus, and Pancharia Soteris. This request I make with the consent of their patrons.

LETTER XI. [xxiv.]

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

AFTER your late sacred father, sir, had, in a noble speech, as well as by his own generous example, exhorted and encouraged the public to acts of munificence, I implored his permission to remove the several statues which I had of the former

* The extensive power of paternal authority was (as has been observed in the notes above,) peculiar to the Romans; but after Chrysippus was made a denizen of Rome, he was not, it should seem, consequentially entitled to that privilege over those children which were born before his denization. On the other hand, if it was expressly granted him, his children could not preserve their right of patronage over their own freedmen, because that right would of course devolve to their father, by means of this acquired dominion over them. The denization, therefore, of his children, is as expressly solicited as his own. But both parties becoming *Quirites*, the children by this creation, and not pleading in right of their father, would be *patres fam.* To prevent which, the clause is added, *ita ut sint in patrie potestate*; as there is another to save to them their rights of patronage over their freedmen, though they were reduced *in patriam potestatem.*

emperors to my corporation;* and at the same time requested the liberty of adding his own to the number. For, as I had hitherto continued them in the respective places wherein they stood when they came into my possession by several different inheritances, they were dispersed in distant parts of my estate. He was pleased to grant my request, and at the same time to give me a very ample testimony of his approbation. I immediately, therefore, wrote to the Decurii, to desire they would allot a piece of ground, upon which I might erect a temple at my own expence; and they, as a mark of their honouring my design, offered me the choice of any site I should think proper. However, my own indisposition, in the first place, and afterward that of your father, together with the duties of that employment with which you were both pleased to entrust me, prevented me from executing my intention. But I have now, I think, a convenient opportunity of making an excursion for that purpose, as my monthly attendance† ends on the first of September, and there are several festivals in the month following. My first petition therefore is, that you would permit me to adorn with your statue the temple I am going to raise; and the next,

* It is highly probable, upon comparing Let. 4. B. 3. and Let. 1. B. 4. that, by the corporation here mentioned, Pliny means *Tifernum Tiberinum*, or *Citta di Castella*, as it is now called; which city had put itself under his patronage and protection.

† Pliny enjoyed the office of treasurer in conjunction with Cornutus Tertullus. It was the custom at Rome for those who had colleagues to administer the duties of their posts by monthly turns. *Buchnerus.*

(in order to the carrying on of my design with all possible expedition,) that you would indulge me with leave of absence. It would ill become the sincerity I profess, were I to dissemble that your goodness, in complying with this desire, will at the same time be extremely serviceable to me in my own private affairs. It is absolutely necessary I should not defer any longer the letting of my lands in that province; for, besides that they amount to above four hundred thousand sesterces,* the season for dressing the vineyards is approaching, and *that* business must fall upon my new tenants. The badness of the weather likewise, for several years past, obliges me to think of making some abatements in my rents; which I cannot possibly settle unless I am present. I shall be indebted, then, to your indulgence, sir, both as forwarding this public act of piety, and giving me the opportunity of settling my private affairs, if you will be pleased to grant me†

* About L. 3200 sterling; the annual income of Pliny's estate in Tuscany. He mentions another near Comum, in the duchy of Milan, the yearly value of which does not appear. We find him likewise considering about the purchase of an estate, for which he was to give about L. 24,000 of our money; but whether he ever completed that purchase is uncertain. (See B. 3. Let. 19.) This, however, we are sure of, that his fortunes were but moderate, considering his high station and necessary expenees; (See B. 2. Let. 4.) and yet, by the advantage of a judicious economy, we have seen him in the course of these letters, exercising a liberality, of which after-ages have furnished no parallel.

† The senators were not allowed to go from Rome into the provinces, without having first obtained leave of the emperor. Sicily, however, had the privilege to be excepted out of that law, as Gallia Narbonensis afterwards was, by Claudius Cæsar. TACIT. *Ann.* 12. c. 23.

leave to be absent for thirty days. I cannot limit a shorter time, as the town and the estate of which I am speaking lie above an hundred and fifty miles from Rome.

LETTER XII. [XXV.]

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

YOU have given me many reasons, both of a public and private nature, why you request leave of absence; but I need no other than that it is your desire: and I doubt not of your returning as soon as possible to the duty of an office, which so much requires your attendance. As I would not seem to check any instance of your affection towards me, I shall not oppose your erecting my statue in the place you mention; though, in general, I am extremely cautious in giving any encouragement to honours of that kind.

LETTER XIII. [VIII.]

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

AS I am sensible, sir, that the highest praise my actions can receive, is to be distinguished by so excellent a prince; I beg you would be graciously pleased to add either the office of Augur or Septemvir* (both which are now vacant,) to the dignity

* One of the seven priests who presided over the feasts appointed in honour of Jupiter and the other gods; an office, as appears, of high dignity, since Pliny ranks it with the Augurship: of which, see Book IV. Let. 8. note.

I already enjoy by your indulgence; that I may have the satisfaction of publicly offering up those vows for your prosperity, from the duty of my office, which I daily prefer to the gods in private, from the affection of my heart.

LETTER XIV. [xxvi.]

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

HAVING safely passed the promontory of Malea,* I am arrived at Ephesus† with all my train, notwithstanding I was detained for some time by contrary winds: an information, sir, in which, I trust, you will think yourself concerned. I design to pursue the remainder of my journey to the province,‡ partly in light vessels, and partly in post-chaises: for, as the extreme heats will prevent my travelling altogether by land, so the Etesian§ winds, which are

* In the Peloponnesus; now called Capo Malea di-sant-Angelo. Catanæus observes, this passage was so dangerous, that the ancients had a proverb, *Cum Maleam deflexeris, domesticos obliviscere*; "The man that sails by Malea must think no more of his family."

† A city of Ionia, in Asia the Less, still remaining.

‡ Bithynia, a province in Anatolia, or Asia the Less, of which Pliny was appointed governor by Trajan, in the 6th year of his reign. A. D. 103, not as an ordinary proconsul, but as that emperor's own lieutenant, with extraordinary powers. See Dio. The following letters were written during his administration of that province.

§ A north wind in the Grecian seas, which rises yearly some time in July, and continues to the end of August; though others extend it to the middle of September. They blow only in the day time. VARENIUS'S *Geog.* Vol. I. p. 513.

now set in, will not permit me to proceed entirely by sea.

LETTER XV. [xxvii.]

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

YOUR information, my dear Pliny, was very acceptable to me; as it is much my concern to know in what manner you arrive at your province. I well approve of your intention to travel either by sea or land, as you shall find most convenient.

LETTER XVI. [xxviii.]

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

AS I had a very favourable voyage to Ephesus, so, in travelling post from thence, I was extremely incommoded by the heats, which occasioned a fever, and detained me some time at Pergamum.* From thence, sir, I took ship again; but being delayed by contrary winds I did not arrive at Bithynia so soon as I hoped.† However, I have

* The famous Troy, situated in that part of Asia, which is now called Romania.

† The original adds, *id est* xv. *Calend. Octobris*, which seems to have crept into the text from the marginal annotation of some glossarist; for, as Pliny mentions the time of his arrival a little lower, there is no occasion for it in this place; and it is not agreeable to his usual elegant conciseness, to repeat that circumstance twice in the same letter. Or perhaps here are two distinct letters run into one, by the carelessness of the transcribers; the former ending with *Hæc.* &c. *in ipso ingressu meo scripsi*; the latter beginning with *Quintodecimo Calend.* &c.

no reason to complain of this delay, since it did not prevent me from reaching the province in time to celebrate your birth-day: a circumstance which I consider as the most auspicious that could attend me. I am at present engaged in examining the finances of the Prusenses,* their disbursements and credits; and the farther I proceed in this affair, the more I am convinced of the necessity of my enquiry. Several considerable sums of money are owing to the city from private persons, which they neglect to pay upon various pretences; as, on the other hand, I find the public funds are, in some instances, very unwarrantably applied. This, sir, I write to you immediately on my arrival. I entered this province on the 17th of September,† and found it in those sentiments of obedience and loyalty which you justly merit from all mankind. You will consider, sir, whether it would not be proper to send hither a surveyor; for I am inclined to think, much might be deducted from what is charged by those who have the conduct of the public works, if a faithful admeasurement were to be taken; at least I am of that opinion from what I have already seen of the accounts of this city, which I am now examining, with the assistance of Maximus.

* Prusa, a maritime city in Bithynia, supposed by some geographers to be the same which is now called *Cheris*; famous for producing great quantities of cherries, which take their name from thence.

† In the 6th year of Trajan's reign, A. D. 103, and the 41st of our author's age; he continued in this province about 18 months. Vid. Mass. *in Vit. Plin.* 129.

LETTER XVII. [xxix.]

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

I SHOULD have rejoiced to have heard that you arrived at Bithynia without inconvenience to yourself, or any of your train; and that your journey from Ephesus had been as easy, as your voyage to that place was favourable. For the rest, your letter informs me, my dear Pliny, what day you reached Bithynia. The people of that province will be convinced, I persuade myself, that I am attentive to their interest; as your conduct towards them will make it manifest, that I could have chosen no person more proper to supply my place. Your first enquiry ought, no doubt, to turn upon the state of the public finances; for it is but too evident they have been mismanaged. I have scarce surveyors sufficient to inspect those works which I am carrying on at Rome,* and in the neighbourhood; but persons of integrity and skill in this art may be found, most certainly, in every province; so that you cannot be at a loss in that article, if you will make due enquiry.

* Among other noble works which this glorious emperor executed, the forum, or square, which went by his name, seems to have been the most magnificent. It was built with the foreign spoils he had taken in war. The covering was entirely brass, the porticos exceedingly beautiful, and the pillars of more than ordinary height and dimensions. In the centre of this forum was erected the famous pillar which has been already described. See Book VIII. Let. 4. note.

LETTER XVIII. [vii.]

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

THOUGH I am well assured, sir, that you, who never omit any opportunity of exercising your generosity, are not unmindful of the request I lately made you; yet since you have frequently, among many other instances of your indulgence, permitted me to repeat my solicitations, I renew them now on behalf of Achius Sura; and earnestly beseech you to honour him with the prætorship, which is become vacant. Though his ambition is extremely moderate, yet the quality of his birth, the inflexible integrity he has preserved in a very narrow fortune, and, more than all, the felicity of your times, which encourages conscious virtue to claim your favour, induce him to hope he may experience it in the present instance.

LETTER XIX. [ix.]

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

I CONGRATULATE both you and the public, most excellent emperor, upon the great and glorious victory you have obtained; so agreeable to the heroism of ancient Rome. May the immortal gods give the same happy success to all your designs, that, under the administration of so many princely virtues, the splendour of the empire may

shine out, not only in all its former, but with additional lustre.*

LETTER XX. [x.]

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

MY lieutenant, Servilius Pudens, came to Nicomedia,† sir, on the 24th of November; and by his arrival freed me, at last, from the anxiety of a very tedious expectation.

LETTER XXI. [xi.]

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

YOUR generosity to me, sir, was the occasion of my being connected with Roslanus Geminus, by the strongest ties; for he was my quæstor‡ when I was consul. His behaviour to me, during the continuance of our offices, was highly respectful; and he has treated me ever since with so peculiar a regard, that, besides the many obligations I owe him upon a public account, I am indebted to him

* It is probable the victory here alluded to was that famous one which Trajan gained over the Dacians; some account of which has been given in the notes above. It is certain, at least, Pliny lived to see his wish accomplished; this emperor having carried the Roman splendour to its highest pitch, and extended the dominions of the empire farther than any of his predecessors: after his death it began to decline.

† Now called Comedia, the capital city of Bithynia.

‡ See Vol. I. Book IV. Letter 15. note.

for the strongest pledges of private friendship. I entreat you, then, to comply with my request for the advancement of a worthy man, whom (if my recommendation has any weight,) you will even distinguish by your particular favour; and whatever trust you shall repose in him, he will endeavour to prove himself deserving of a still higher. But I forbear to enter into a more particular detail of his merit; being persuaded, that his integrity, his probity, and his vigilance, are well known to you, not only from those high posts which he has exercised in Rome within your immediate inspection, but from his behaviour when he served under you in the army. One thing, however, my affection for him inclines me to think I have not yet sufficiently performed; and therefore, sir, I repeat my entreaties, that you will give me the pleasure, as early as possible, of rejoicing in the advancement of my quæstor; or, in other words, of receiving an addition to my own honours in the person of my friend.

LETTER XXII. [xii.]

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

I KNOW not, sir, in what words sufficiently to express the joy I received, when I heard you had, in compliance with the request of my mother-in-law* and myself, granted Cœlius Clemens the proconsulship of this province† after the expiration of

* Pompeia Celerina.

† Bithynia.

his consular office; as it is a proof that your beneficence towards me graciously extends itself through my whole family. As I dare not pretend to make an equal return to those obligations I so justly owe you, I can only have recourse to vows; and ardently implore the gods, that I may not be found unworthy of those favours, which you are repeatedly conferring upon me.

LETTER XXIII. [xiii.]

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

I RECEIVED, sir, a dispatch from your freedman Lycormas, desiring me, if any embassy from Bosphorus* should come hither in the way to Rome, that I would detain it till his arrival. None has yet arrived, at least in the city,† where I now am. But a courier passing through this place from the king of Sarmatia,‡ I embrace the opportunity which accidentally offers itself, of sending with him the messenger which Lycormas dispatched hither, that you might be informed at once, by his letter and the king's, of certain circumstances, which it may be expedient, perhaps, that they should come to your knowledge at the same time.

* Bosphorus Cimerius, now called Vospero, in Krim Tartary.

† Nicea, (as appears by the 15th Letter of this Book,) a city in Bithynia, now called Ismich.

‡ Sarmatia was divided into European, Asiatic, and German Sarmatia. It is not exactly known what bounds the ancients gave to this extensive region; however, in general, it comprehended the northern parts of Russia, Muscovy, Lesser Tartary, and the greatest part of the kingdom of Poland, &c.

LETTER XXIV. [xiv.]

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

I AM informed, by a letter from the king of Sarmatia, that some affairs have happened, of which it is requisite you should be immediately acquainted. In order, therefore, to expedite the dispatches which his courier was charged with to you, I granted him a warrant to make use of the public post.*

LETTER XXV. [xv.]

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

THE ambassador from the king of Sarmatia having remained two days, by his own choice, at

* The first invention of public couriers is ascribed to Cyrus, who, in order to receive the earliest intelligence from the governors of the several provinces, erected post-houses throughout the kingdom of Persia, at equal distances, which supplied men and horses to forward the public dispatches. (*Cyrop.* l. 8. p. 496. edit. Hutchinson.) Augustus was the first who introduced this most useful institution among the Romans, by employing post-chaises, disposed at convenient distances, for the purpose of political intelligence. (SUET. *in Vit. Aug.* c. 49.) The magistrates of every city were obliged to furnish horses for these messengers, upon producing a *diploma*, or a kind of warrant, either from the emperor himself, or from those who had that authority under him. (PLUTARCH. *in Vit. Galbæ.*) Sometimes, though upon very extraordinary occasions, persons who travelled upon their private affairs, were allowed to avail themselves of these post-chaises. (See Letter 121. of this Book.) It is surprising they were not sooner used for the purposes of commerce and private communication. Louis XI. first established them in France, in the year 1474; but it was not till the 12th of Car. II. that the post-office was settled in England by act of parliament. (RAPIN, Vol. II. 662. fol. ed.)

Nicea, where he found me, I did not think it reasonable, sir, to detain him any longer; not only because it was still uncertain when your freedman Lycormas would arrive, but as some indispensable affairs require my presence in a different part of the province. Of this circumstance I thought it necessary that you should be informed, because I lately acquainted you in a letter, that Lycormas had desired, if an embassy should come this way from Bosphorus, that I would detain it till his arrival. But I did not see there was any pretence of retarding him any longer; especially as the dispatches from Lycormas, which (as I have already mentioned) I was not willing to detain, would probably reach you some days sooner than this ambassador.

LETTER XXVI. [xvi.]

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

I RECEIVED a letter, sir, from Apuleius, an officer in the troops stationed at Nicomedia, informing me that one Callidromus, being arrested by Maximus and Dionysius, (two bakers, to whom he had hired himself,) fled for refuge to your statue;*

* Particular temples, altars, and statues, were allowed among the Romans as places of sanctuary to slaves, debtors, and malefactors. This custom was introduced by Romulus, who borrowed it probably from the Greeks; but during the free state of Rome, few of these asylums were permitted. This custom prevailed most under the emperors, till it grew so scandalous, that the emperor Pius found it necessary to restrain those privileged places by an edict. See LIPSII *Excurs.* ad TACITI *Ann.* 3. c. 36.

that being brought before a magistrate, he declared he was formerly slave to Laberius Maximus; but being taken prisoner by Susagus* in Mœsia,† he was sent as a present from Decebalus to Pacorus, king of Parthia, in whose service he continued several years, from whence he made his escape, and came to Nicomedia. When he was examined before me, he confirmed this account; for which reason, I thought it necessary to send him to you.‡ I should have sent him sooner, but I deferred his journey, in order to make an enquiry concerning a gem which he said was taken from him, upon which was engraven the figure of Pacorus in his royal habit: I was desirous (if it could have been found) of transmitting this curiosity to you, with a small ingot of Parthian gold, which he says he brought from thence out of the mines; I have fixed my seal to it, the impression of which is a chariot drawn by four horses.

LETTER XXVII. [xvii.]

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

YOUR freedman and procurator, Maximus,§ behaved, sir, during all the time we were together,

* General under Decebalus.

† A province in Dacia, comprehending the southern parts of Servia, and part of Bulgaria.

‡ The second expedition of Trajan against Decebalus was undertaken the same year that Pliny went governor into this province: the reason, therefore, why Pliny sent this Callidromus to the emperor, seems to be, that some use might possibly be made of him in favour of that design.

§ Receiver of the finances.

with great probity, attention, and diligence; as one strongly attached to your interest, and strictly observant of discipline. This testimony I very willingly give him; and I give it with all the fidelity I owe to you.

LETTER XXVIII. [xviii.]

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

AFTER having experienced, sir, in Gabius Bassus, who commands on the frontiers of Pontica,* the greatest integrity, honour, and diligence, as well as the most particular respect to myself, I cannot refuse him my best wishes and suffrage; and I give them to him with all that fidelity which is due to you. I have found him abundantly qualified, by having served in the army under you; and it is owing to the advantages of your discipline, that he has learned to merit the honour of your approbation. The military and the people here, who have had abundant experience of his justice and humanity, rival each other in that glorious testimony they give of his conduct, both public and private; and I certify this with all the sincerity you have a right to expect from me.

LETTER XXIX. [xix.]

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

NYMPHIDIUS LUPUS,† sir, served with me in the army. He commanded a body of the auxil-

* Krim Tartary.

† The text calls him *Primipilarem*, that is, one who had been *Primipilus*, an officer in the army, whose post was both highly

itary forces at the same time that I was military tribune; and it was from that connection my affection for him began. A long acquaintance hath since mutually endeared and strengthened our friendship. For this reason I did violence to his repose, and insisted upon his attending me into Bithynia, as my assessor in council. He most readily granted me this proof of his amity; and, without any regard to the plea of age, or of retirement, he shared, and continues to share, with me, the fatigue of public business. I consider his relations, therefore, as my own; in which number, Nymphidius Lupus, his son, claims my particular notice. He is a youth of great merit and indefatigable application; and, in every view of his character, well worthy of so excellent a father. The early proof he gave of his merit, when he commanded a regiment of foot, is a proof that he is equal to any honour you shall think proper to confer upon him; and it gained him the strongest testimony of approbation from those most illustrious personages, Julius Ferox, and Fuscus Salinator. I will add, sir, that I shall rejoice in any increase of dignity which he shall receive, as an occasion of particular satisfaction to myself.

LETTER XXX.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

I REQUEST your determination, sir, in a point wherein I am greatly doubtful: it is, whether I

honourable and profitable; among other parts of his office, he had the care of the Eagle, or chief standard of the legion.

should place the public slaves* as centinels round the prisons of the several cities in this province, (as has been hitherto the practice,) or employ a party of soldiers for that purpose? On the one hand, I am afraid the public slaves will not attend this duty with the fidelity they ought; and on the other, that it will engage too large a body of the soldiery: in the mean while, I have joined a few of the latter with the former. I am apprehensive, however, there may be some danger, that this method will occasion a general neglect of duty, as it will afford them a mutual pretence of throwing the blame upon each other.

LETTER XXXI.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

THERE is no occasion, my dear Pliny, to draw off any soldiers,† in order to guard the prisons. Let us rather persevere in the ancient custom observed in this province, of employing the public slaves for that purpose: the fidelity with which they shall execute their duty will depend much upon your care and strict discipline. It is greatly to be feared, as you observe, if the soldiers should be mixed with the public slaves, they will mutually trust to each other, and by that means grow so much the more

* Slaves, who were purchased by the public.

† In the original it is *Commilitones*, "my fellow soldiers;" an appellation which those emperors, who desired to be well with the army, affected to use. Suetonius informs us, that Augustus would never employ that expression, as thinking it a condescension unbecoming his dignity; and neither suitable to the tranquillity of the times, nor to military discipline.

negligent. But my principal objection is, that as few soldiers as possible should be withdrawn from their standard.

LETTER XXXII.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

GABIUS BASSUS, who commands upon the frontiers of Pontica, in a manner suitable to the respect and duty which he owes you, has been with me, sir, for several days. As far as I could observe, he is a person of great merit, and worthy of your favour. I acquainted him with your order, that he should be contented with ten beneficiary soldiers,* two horse-guards, and one captain, out of the troops which you were pleased to assign to my command. He assured me those would not be sufficient, and that he would write to you accordingly; for which reason, I thought it proper not immediately to recall his supernumeraries.

* The most probable conjecture (for it is a point of a good deal of obscurity) concerning the *Beneficiarii*, seems to be, that they were a certain number of soldiers exempted from the usual duty of their office, in order to be employed as a sort of body-guards to the general. These were probably foot, as the *Equites*, here mentioned, were perhaps of the same nature, only that they served on horseback. *Equites singularis Cæsariis, Augusti*, &c. are frequently met with upon ancient inscriptions, and are generally supposed to mean the body-guards of the emperor.

LETTER XXXIII.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

I HAVE received, from Gabius Bassus, the letter you mention, acquainting me, that the number of soldiers I had ordered him was not sufficient; and for your information I have directed my answer to be hereunto annexed. It is very material to distinguish between what the exigency of affairs requires, and what an ambitious desire of power may think necessary. As for ourselves, the interest of the public must be our only guide: accordingly, it is incumbent upon us to take all possible care, that the soldiers shall not be absent from their standard.

LETTER XXXIV.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

THE Prusenses, sir, having an ancient bath which lies in a ruinous state, desire your leave to repair it; but, upon examination, I am of opinion it ought to be rebuilt. I think, therefore, you may indulge them in this request, as there will be a sufficient fund for that purpose, partly from those debts which are due from private persons* to the public, which I am now levying; and partly from the money they raise among themselves towards furnishing the bath with oil, which they are willing

* See Letter 28. of this Book.

to apply to the carrying on of this building; a work which the dignity of the city, and the splendour of your times, seem to render necessary.

LETTER XXXV.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

IF the erecting of a public bath will not be too great a charge upon the Prusenses, we may comply with their request; provided, however, that no new tax be levied for this purpose, nor any of those taken off which are appropriated to necessary services.

LETTER XXXVI.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

I AM assured, sir, by your freedman and receiver-general Maximus, that it is necessary he should have an additional party of soldiers assigned to him, besides the *beneficiarii*,* which by your orders I appointed to the very worthy Gemellinus. Those, therefore, which I found in his service, I thought proper he should retain, especially as he was going into Paphlagonia,† in order to procure corn. For his better protection, likewise, and because it was his request, I added two of the cavalry. But I beg you would inform me, in your next *dis-*

* See Letter 82, of this Book, in note.

† A province in the Lesser Asia, bounded by the Black Sea, and the rivers Delase and Casilirmar.

patches, what method you would have me observe for the future in points of this nature.

LETTER XXXVII.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

AS my freedman Maximus was going upon an extraordinary commission to procure corn, I approve of your having supplied him with a file of soldiers. But when he shall return to the duties of his former post, I think two from you, and as many from his coadjutor, my receiver-general Verbius Gemellinus, will be sufficient.

LETTER XXXVIII.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

THE very excellent young man Sempronius Cælianus having discovered two slaves* among the

* The Roman policy excluded slaves from entering into military service, and it was death if they did so. However, upon cases of great necessity, this maxim was dispensed with; but then they were first made free before they were received into the army, excepting only (as Servius, in his notes upon Virgil, observes,) after the fatal battle of Cannæ; when the public distress was so great, that the Romans recruited their army with their slaves, though they had not time to give them their freedom. One reason, perhaps, of this policy might be, that they did not think it safe to arm so considerable a body of men, whose numbers, in the times when the Roman luxury was highest, we may have some idea of, by the instance which Pliny the naturalist mentions of Claudius Isodorus, who, at his death, was possessed of no less than 4116 slaves, notwithstanding he had lost great numbers in the civil wars. PLIN. *Hist. Nat.* xxxiii. 10. MEURSIUS *de Luxu Rom.*

recruits, has sent them to me. But I deferred passing sentence till I had consulted you, the restorer and supporter of military discipline, concerning the punishment proper to be inflicted upon them. My principal doubt is, that although they have taken the military oath, they are not yet entered into any particular legion. I request you, therefore, sir, to inform me, what course I should pursue in this affair, especially as it concerns example.

LETTER XXXIX.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

SEMPRONIUS CÆLIANUS has acted agreeably to my orders, in sending such persons to be tried before you, as appear to deserve capital punishment. It is material, however, in the case in question, to enquire, whether these slaves enlisted themselves voluntarily, or were chosen by the officers, or were presented as substitutes for others. If they were chosen, the officer is guilty; if they are proxies, the blame rests with those who deputed them; but if, conscious of the legal inabilities of their station, they presented themselves voluntarily, the punishment must fall upon their own heads. That they are not yet entered into any legion, makes no great difference in their case; for they ought to have given a true account of themselves immediately, upon their being approved as fit for the service.

LETTER XL.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

AS I have your permission, sir, to address myself to you in all my doubts, you will not deem it below the dignity of your exalted station, to descend to those humbler affairs, which concern my administration of this province. I find there are, in several cities, particularly those of Nicomedia and Nicea, certain persons who take upon themselves to act as public slaves,* and receive an annual stipend accordingly, notwithstanding they have been condemned either to the mines, the public games,† or other punishments of the like nature. Having received information of this abuse, I have been long debating with myself, how I should act. On the one hand, to send them back to their respective punishments, (many of them being now grown old, and behaving, as I am assured, with sobriety and modesty,) would, I thought, be proceeding against them too severely; on the other, to retain convicted criminals in the public service, seemed not altogether decent. I considered, at the same time, to support these people in idleness, would be an useless expence to the public; and to leave them to starve, would be dangerous. I was obliged, therefore, to suspend the determination of this matter,

* See note, Letter 30. of this Book.

† A punishment among the Romans, usually inflicted upon slaves, by which they were to engage with wild beasts, or perform the part of gladiators, in the public shows.

till I could consult with you. You will be desirous, perhaps, to be informed, how it happened, that these persons escaped the punishments to which they were condemned. This enquiry I have also made, but cannot return you any satisfactory answer. The decrees against them were indeed produced; but no record appears of their having ever been reversed. It was asserted, however, that these people were pardoned upon their petition to the proconsuls, or their lieutenants; which seems likely to be the truth, as it is improbable that any person would have dared to set them at liberty without authority.

LETTER XLI.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

YOU will remember you were sent into Bithynia for the particular purpose of correcting those many abuses which appeared necessary to be reformed. Now, none stands more in need of reformation, than that criminals, who have been sentenced to punishment, should not only be set at liberty, (as your letter informs me,) without any apparent authority, but even appointed to employments, which ought alone to be exercised by persons whose characters are irreproachable. Those, therefore, among them, who have been convicted within these ten years, and whose sentence has not been reversed by proper authority, must be sent back to their respective punishments; but where more than ten years have elapsed since their con-

viction, and they are grown old and infirm, let them be disposed of in such employments, as are but few degrees removed from the punishments to which they were sentenced; that is, either to attend upon the public baths, cleanse the common sewers, or repair the streets and highways; those being the offices to which such persons are usually sentenced.

LETTER XLII.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

WHILE I was making a progress in a different part of the province, a most destructive fire broke out at Nicomedia, which not only consumed several private houses, but also two public buildings; the town-house and the temple of Isis, though they stood on contrary sides of the street. The occasion of its spreading thus wide, was partly owing to the violence of the wind, and partly to the indolence of the people, who, it appears, stood fixed and idle spectators of this terrible calamity. The truth is, the city was not furnished with either engines,* buckets, or any single instrument proper to

* It has been generally imagined that the ancients had not the art of raising water by engines; but this passage seems to favour the contrary opinion. The word in the original is *Sipho*, which Hesychius explains, (as one of the commentators observes,) *instrumentum ad jaculandas aquas adversus incendia*; "an instrument to throw up water against fires." But there is a passage in Seneca which seems to put this matter beyond conjecture, though none of the critics upon this place have taken notice of it: *Solemus*, says he, *duabus manibus inter se junctis aquam concipere et compressa utrimque palma in modum siphonis exprimere*, (Q. N. l. 2.

extinguish fires; which I have now, however, given directions to be provided. You will consider, sir, whether it may not be advisable to form a company of firemen, consisting only of one hundred and fifty members. I will take care none but those of that business shall be admitted into it; and that the privileges granted them shall not be extended to any other purpose. As this corporate body will be restricted to so small a number of members, it will be easy to keep them under proper regulation.

LETTER XLIII.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

YOU are of opinion it would be proper to establish a company of firemen in Nicomedia, agreeably to what has been practised in several other cities. But it is to be remembered, that societies of this sort have greatly disturbed the peace of the province in general, and of those cities in particular. Whatever name we give them, and for whatever purpose they may be instituted, they will not fail to form themselves into factious assemblies, however short their meetings may be. It will, therefore, be safer, to provide such machines as are of service in extinguishing fires, enjoining the owners of houses to assist in preventing the mischief from spreading; and if it should be necessary, to call in the aid of the populace.

16.) where we plainly see the use of this *Sipho* was to throw up water, and consequently the Romans were acquainted with that art. The account which Pliny gives of the fountains at his Tuscan villa is likewise another proof.

LETTER XLIV.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

AGREEABLY to the general notice we previously gave for that purpose, we have offered, sir, our annual vows* for your prosperity, in which that of the empire is essentially involved; imploring the gods to grant, that these yearly vows may never cease to be thus, by public authority, announced and offered.

LETTER XLV.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

I RECEIVED the satisfaction, my dear Pliny, of being informed by your letter, that you, together with the people under your government, have both discharged and renewed your annual vows to the immortal gods, for my health and happiness.

LETTER XLVI.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

THE city of Nicomedia, sir, have expended three millions three hundred and twenty-nine sester-

* This was an anniversary custom observed throughout the empire, on the 30th of December.

ces* in building an aquæduct; which, not answering the intent, the works are entirely fallen into ruin. They made a second attempt in another place, where they expended two millions.† But in this, likewise, they were disappointed; so that, after having been at an immense charge to no purpose, they must still be at a farther expence, in order to be accommodated with water. I have examined a fine spring, from whence the water may be conveyed over arches (as was attempted in their first design) in such a manner, that the higher, as well as level and low parts of the city may be supplied. There are but very few of the old arches remaining; the square stones, however, employed in the former, may be used in turning the new arches. I am of opinion part should be raised with brick, as that will be the easier and cheaper material. But that this work may not meet with the same ill success as the former, it will be necessary to send hither an architect, or some person skilled in the construction of this kind of water-works. And I will venture to say, from the beauty and usefulness of the design, it will be an erection well worthy the splendour of your times.

LETTER XLVII.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

CARE must be taken to supply the city of Nicomedia with water; and that business, I am well

* About L. 24,000 of our money.
† About L. 16,000 of our money.

persuaded, you will perform with all the diligence you ought. But it is most certainly no less incumbent upon you to examine, by whose misconduct it has happened, that such large sums have been thrown away upon this attempt; lest they apply the money to private purposes, and the aquæduct in question, like the preceding, should be begun, and and afterwards left unfinished. You will let me know the result of your enquiry.

LETTER XLVIII.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

THE citizens of Nicea, sir, are building a theatre, on which, though it is not yet finished, they have already expended, as I am informed, (for I have not examined the account myself,) above ten millions of sesterces ;* and, what is worse, I fear

* About L. 80,000 of our money. To those who are not acquainted with the immense riches of the ancients, it may seem incredible that a city, and not the capital one, of a conquered province, should expend so large a sum of money upon only the shell (as it appears to be) of a theatre; but Asia was esteemed the most considerable part of the world for wealth; its fertility and exportations (as Tully observes, *Orat. pro Imp. Cn. Pomp.*) exceeding that of all other countries. The ingenious Dr. Arbuthnot quotes an instance from Athenæus of Asiatic riches, which a man must be a tolerable arithmetician even to count. It is the value of the treasure of Sardanapalus, with which he made a funeral pile for himself and family, when he was besieged by Arbaces, king of the Medes. "Athenæus makes the value of the treasure of this pile amount to 100,000,000 talents, which, reckoned in Babylonic talents amounts to L. 16,953,125,000. This was only the value of the silver; there was, besides, a tenth part of that number of talents of gold, which, if gold was reckoned in a decuple proportion, will just double that sum."—ARBUTH. *Ant. Coins*, p. 203.

done concerning the theatre, which the inhabitants of Nicea are building; as for myself, it will be sufficient if you let me know your determination. With respect to the particular parts of this theatre which are to be raised at a private charge, you will see those engagements fulfilled, when the body of the building, to which they are to be annexed, shall be finished. These paltry Greeks are, I know, immoderately fond of gymnastic diversions, and therefore, perhaps, the citizens of Nicea have planned a more magnificent fabric for this purpose than is necessary; however, they must be contented with such as will be sufficient to answer the use for which it is intended.

I entirely leave it to you to advise the Claudiopolitani as you shall think proper, with relation to their bath, which they have placed, it seems, in a very improper situation. As there is no province that is not furnished with men of skill and ingenuity, you cannot possibly want architects; unless you think it the shortest way to procure them from Rome, when it is generally from Greece that they come to us.

LETTER L.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

WHEN I reflect upon the splendour of your exalted station, and the magnanimity of your spirit, nothing, I am persuaded, can be more suitable to both, than to point out to you such designs as are worthy of your glorious and immortal name, as be-

ing no less useful than magnificent. Bordering upon the territories of the city of Nicomedia is a most extensive lake; upon which the commodities of the country are easily and cheaply transported to the high road; but from thence are conveyed in carriages to the sea side, at great charge and labour. To remedy this inconvenience, will require many hands; but, upon such an occasion, they cannot be wanting; for the country, and particularly the city, is exceedingly populous; and one may assuredly hope, that every person will readily engage in a work which will be of universal benefit. It only remains then to send hither, if you shall think proper, a surveyor or an architect, in order to examine whether the lake lies above the level of the sea; the engineers of this province being of opinion that the former is higher by forty cubits.* I find there is in the neighbourhood of this place a large canal, which was formerly cut by one of the kings of this country; but as it was left unfinished, it is uncertain whether the canal was for the purpose of draining the adjacent lands, or making a communication between the lake and the river. It is equally doubtful, whether the death of this prince, or the despair of being able to accomplish the design, prevented its completion. If the latter, I am so much the more ambitious, for the honour of your illustrious character, (and I hope you will pardon me the pride,) that

* A Roman cubit is equal to 1 foot 5 inches $\frac{406}{1000}$ of our measure.—ARBUTHNOT's *Tab.*

you may have the glory of executing what *kings** could only attempt.

LETTER LI.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

THERE is something in the scheme you propose of opening a communication between the lake and the sea, which may, perhaps, tempt me to consent. But you must first carefully examine the situation of this body of water, what quantity it contains, and from whence it is supplied; lest, by giving it an opening into the sea, it should be totally drained. You may apply to Calpurnius Macer for an engineer; as I will also send you from hence some persons skilled in works of this nature.

LETTER LII.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

UPON examining the public expences of the city of Byzantium,† which I find are extremely

* A commentator upon this passage thinks this a very extraordinary compliment; "As if," says he, "an emperor of Rome could not do more than a little king of Bithynia." But it is much more probable, that this critic should be mistaken in his objection, than Pliny in his compliment: and though he will have it to be a *little* king, it is more reasonable to suppose our author meant some great king of Persia. Besides, *Imperator*, among the Romans, had not of itself any such high idea, as has been affixed to it in later times. The meaning, therefore, of this wish seems to be, that though Trajan was contented to be in title no more than general, (*Imperator*,) yet, in acts of public munificence, he might be more than those who proudly styled themselves kings.

† Now Constantinople.

great, I was informed, sir, that the appointments of the ambassador, which they send yearly to you with their homage and the decree which passes in the senate upon that occasion, amount to twelve thousand sesterces.* But knowing the generous maxims of your government, I thought proper to send the decree without the ambassador; that at the same time they discharged their public duty to you, they might be eased in the manner of paying it. This city is likewise taxed with the sum of three thousand sesterces,† towards defraying the expence of an envoy, whom they annually send to compliment the governor of Moesia; this expence I have also directed to be spared. I beg, sir, you would deign either to confirm my judgment, or correct my error in these points, by acquainting me with your sentiments.

LETTER LIII.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

I WELL approve, my dear Pliny, of your having excused the Byzantines the expence of sending an ambassador to me. I shall esteem their duty as sufficiently paid, though I only receive the act of their senate through your hands. The governor of Moesia must likewise excuse them, if they compliment him at a less expence.

* About L.96 sterling.

† About L. 24 of our money.

LETTER LIV.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

I BEG, sir, you would settle a doubt I have concerning your *diplomas*;* whether you think proper that those *diplomas*, the dates whereof are expired, shall continue in force, and how long? For I am apprehensive I may, through ignorance, either confirm such of these instruments as are illegal, or prevent the effect of those which are necessary.

LETTER LV.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

THOSE diplomas, the dates whereof are expired, must by no means be made use of. For which reason it is an inviolable rule with me, to send new instruments of this kind into all the provinces before they are immediately wanted.

LETTER LVI.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

UPON intimating, sir, my design to the city of Apameat of examining into the state of their

* A diploma is properly a grant of certain privileges, either to particular places or persons. It signifies, also, grants of other kinds; and it sometimes means post-warrants, as, perhaps, it does in this place. See Letter 14. of this Book, in the notes.

† A city in Bithynia.

public funds and revenues; they told me they were very willing I should inspect their accounts, but that no proconsul had ever yet perused them; as they had a privilege (and that of a very ancient date) of administering the affairs of their corporation in the manner they thought proper. I required them to draw up a memorial of what they then asserted, and I transmit it to you precisely as I received it; although I am sensible it contains several things foreign to the question. I beg you would honour me with your commands, how I am to act in this matter; for, I should be extremely sorry either to exceed, or fall short of the powers of my commission.

LETTER LVII.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

THE memorial of the Apameans, annexed to your letter, saved me the necessity of considering the reasons they suggest, why the former proconsuls forbore to inspect their accounts; since they are willing to submit them to your examination. Their compliance deserves to be encouraged; and they may be assured the enquiry you are to make, in pursuance of my orders, shall be with a full reserve to their privileges.

LETTER LVIII.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

The Nicomedians, sir, before my arrival in this province, had begun to build a new forum contiguous to their former, in a corner of which stands an ancient temple, dedicated to the *mother of the gods*.* This edifice must either be repaired, or removed; chiefly because it is a much lower building than that very lofty one which is now erecting. Upon enquiry whether any particular condition had been annexed to the dedication of this temple, I was informed that their ceremonies of dedication differ from ours. You will be pleased, therefore, sir, to consider whether a temple, which has not been consecrated according to our rites, may be removed,† consistently with the reverence due to religion: for, if there should be no objection from that quarter, the removal in every other respect would be extremely convenient.

LETTER LIX.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

YOU may, without scruple, my dear Pliny, if the situation requires it, remove the temple of

* Cybele, Rhea, or Ops, as she is severally called; from whom, according to the Pagan creed, the rest of the gods are supposed to have descended.

† Whatever was legally consecrated, was ever afterwards unapplicable to profane uses.

the *mother of the gods* from the place where it now stands, to any other more commodious. You need be under no difficulty concerning the act of dedication; for the ground of a foreign city* is not capable of receiving that kind of consecration which is sanctified by our laws.

LETTER LX.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

WE have celebrated, sir, (with those sentiments of gratulation which your virtues so justly merit,) the day of your accession to the empire, which was also its preservation, imploring the gods to preserve you in health and prosperity; for upon your welfare the security and repose of the world depends. I renewed at the same time the oath of allegiance at the head of the army, which repeated it after me in the usual form, the people of the province zealously concurring in the same oath.

LETTER LXI.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

YOUR letter, my dear Pliny, was extremely acceptable, as it informed me of the zeal and affection with which you, together with the army and the provincials, solemnized the day of my accession to the empire.

* That is, a city not admitted to enjoy the laws and privileges of Rome.

LETTER LXII.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

THE debts which were owing to the public, are, by the prudence, sir, of your councils, and the care of my administration, either actually paid, or are now recovering; but I am afraid the money must lie unemployed. For as, on one side, there are few or no opportunities of purchasing land, so, on the other, one cannot meet with any person who is willing to borrow of the public,* (especially at the interest of 12 *per cent.*) when they can raise money upon the same terms from private hands. You will therefore consider, sir, whether it may not be advisable, in order to invite responsible persons to take this money, to lower the interest; or if that scheme should not succeed, to place it in the hands of the Decurii, upon their giving sufficient security to the public. And though they should not be willing to receive it, yet as the rate of interest will be abated, the hardship will be so much the less.

LETTER LXIII.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

I AGREE with you, my dear Pliny, that there seems to be no other method of facilitating

* The reason why they did not choose to borrow of the public at the same rate of interest which they paid to private persons,

the placing out of the public money, than by lowering the interest; the rate of which you will determine according to the number of borrowers. But to compel persons to receive it, who are not so disposed, when possibly they themselves may have no opportunity of employing it, is, by no means, consistent with the justice of my government.

LETTER LXIV.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

I RETURN you my warmest acknowledgments, sir, that, among the many important occupations in which you are engaged, you have condescended to be my guide in those points wherein I have consulted you; a favour which I must now again beseech you to grant me. A certain person presented himself to me with a complaint, that his adversaries, who had been banished for three years by the illustrious Servilius Calvus, still remained in the province; they, on the contrary, affirmed, that Calvus had revoked their sentence, and produced his edict for that purpose: I thought it necessary, therefore, to refer the affair entirely to you. For, as I have your express orders not to restore any person who has been sentenced to banishment either by myself or others; so I have no directions with respect to those, who, having been banished by some of my predecessors in this gov-

was (as one of the commentators observes) because, in the former instance, they were obliged to give security; whereas, in the latter, they could raise money upon their personal credit.

ernment, have by them also been restored. It is necessary for me, therefore, to beg you would inform me, sir, how I am to act with regard to the above-mentioned persons, as also to others, who, after having been condemned to perpetual banishment, have been found in the province without permission to return; for cases of that nature have likewise fallen under my cognizance. A person was brought before me, who had been sentenced to perpetual exile by the proconsul Julius Bassus; but, as I knew that the acts of Bassus, during his administration, had been rescinded, and that the senate had granted leave to all those who had fallen under his condemnation, of appealing from his decision at any time within the space of two years; I enquired of this man, whether he had, accordingly, stated his case to the proconsul. He replied, he had not. I entreat you, therefore, to inform me, whether you would have him sent back into exile; or whether you think some more severe, and what kind of punishment should be inflicted upon him, and such others who may hereafter be found under the same circumstances. I have annexed to my letter the decree of Calvus, together with the edict, by which the persons abovementioned were restored, as also the decree of Bassus.

LETTER LXV.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

I WILL let you know my determination concerning those exiles which were banished for three

years by the proconsul P. Servilius Calvus, and soon afterwards restored to the province by his edict, when I shall have informed myself from him of the reasons of this proceeding. With respect to that person who was sentenced to perpetual banishment by Julius Bassus, yet continued to remain in the province, without making his appeal, if he thought himself aggrieved, (though he had two years given him for that purpose,) I would have him sent in chains to my prætorian prefects ;* for, only to remand him back to a punishment which he has contumaciously eluded, will by no means be a sufficient chastisement.

LETTER LXVI.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

WHEN I cited the judges, sir, to attend me at a sessions† which I was going to hold, Flavius Archippus claimed the privilege of being excused, as exercising the profession of a philosopher.‡ It was alleged by some, who were present, that he

* These, in the original institution, as settled by Augustus, were only commanders of his body guards; but in the latter times of the Roman empire, they were next in authority under the emperor, to whom they seem to have acted as a sort of prime ministers.

† The provinces were divided into a kind of circuits, called *conventus*, whither the proconsuls used to go in order to administer justice. The judges here mentioned must not be understood to mean the same sort of judicial officers as with us; they were rather in the nature of our juries.

‡ By the imperial constitutions, the philosophers were exempted from all public functions. CATANÆUS.

ought not only to be excused from that office, but even struck out of the roll of judges, and remanded back to the punishment from which he had escaped, by breaking his chains. At the same time, a sentence of the proconsul Velius Paullus was read, by which it appeared that Archippus had been condemned to the mines for forgery. He had nothing to produce in proof of this sentence having ever been reversed. He alleged, nevertheless, in favour of his restitution, a petition which he presented to Domitian, together with a letter from that prince, and a decree of the Prusensians in his honour. To these he annexed a letter which he had received from you; as also an edict, and a letter of your august father, confirming the grants which had been made to him by Domitian. For these reasons, notwithstanding crimes of so atrocious a nature were laid to his charge, I did not think proper to determine any thing concerning him, without first consulting you, as it is an affair which seems to merit your particular decision. I have transmitted to you, with this letter, the several allegations on both sides.

DOMITIAN'S LETTER TO TERENTIUS MAXIMUS.

"FLAVIUS ARCHIPPUS, the philosopher, has prevailed with me to give an order for 600,000 sesterces,* to be laid out in the purchase of an estate for the support of him and his family, in the neigh-

* About L.4800 of our money.

bourhood of Prusias,* his native country. Let this be done accordingly; and place that sum to the article of my benefactions."

FROM THE SAME, TO L. APPIUS MAXIMUS.

"I RECOMMEND, my dear Maximus, to your protection, that worthy philosopher Archippus, whose moral conduct is agreeable to the principles of the philosophy he professes; and I would have you pay great regard to whatever he shall reasonably request."

THE EDICT OF THE EMPEROR NERVA.

"THERE are some points, Quirites,† concerning which the happy tenor of my government is, I am persuaded, a sufficient indication of my sentiments; and a good prince need not give express declarations in matters wherein his intentions cannot but be universally understood. Every citizen in the empire will bear me witness, that I gave up my private repose to the security of the public, and in order that I might have the pleasure of dispensing new bounties of my own, as also of confirming those which had been granted by my predecessors. But lest the memory of him‡ who confer-

* Geographers are not agreed where to place this city; Cellarious conjectures it may possibly be the same with *Prusa ad Olympum*, Prusa at the foot of Mount Olympus in Mysia, mentioned in Letter 85. of this Book.

† A general appellation given to the Roman people.

‡ Domitian.

red these grants, or the diffidence of those who received them, should occasion any interruption to the public joy, I thought it no less necessary than it is agreeable to me to obviate these suspicions, by assuring the persons concerned of my indulgence. Let it not be thought that I shall rescind either the public or private acts of any former prince, in order to merit the credit of restoring them; nor need any who have received the gratifications of imperial favour, petition me to have them confirmed. Rather let them leave me at leisure for conferring new grants; under the assurance, that I am only to be solicited for those bounties which have not already been obtained, and which the happier fortune of the empire has put it in my power to bestow."

FROM THE SAME, TO TULLIUS JUSTUS.

"HAVING publicly declared my resolution to confirm the edicts of my predecessors, and even those also which may have been prevented by their deaths from being carried into effect; the directions contained in Domitian's rescript must be observed."

LETTER LXVII.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

FLAVIUS ARCHIPPUS has conjured me, by all my vows for your prosperity, and by your immortal glory, that I would transmit to you the memorial which he presented to me. I could not

refuse a request pressed upon me in *such* terms; however, I acquainted the prosecutrix with this my intention, from whom I have also received a memorial on her part. I have annexed them both to this letter; that by hearing, as it were, each party, you may the better be enabled to decide.

LETTER LXVIII.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

IT is possible that Domitian might be ignorant of the circumstances in which Archippus was, when he wrote the letter so much to that philosopher's credit. However, it is more agreeable to my disposition to suppose that prince designed he should be restored to his former situation; especially since he so often had the honour of a statue decreed to him by those, who could not be ignorant* of the sentence pronounced against him by the proconsul Paullus. But I do not mean to intimate, my dear Pliny, that if any new charge should be brought, you should be the less disposed to hear his accusers. I have examined the memorial of his prosecutrix, Furia Prima, as also that of Archippus himself, which you sent with your letter.

* In the text of all the editions it is *qui ignorabant*, but the reasoning seems to require the negative particle; though the commentators have passed over the passage without objection.

LETTER LXIX.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

THE apprehensions you express, sir,* that the lake will be in danger of being entirely drained, if a communication should be opened between that and the sea, by means of the river, are agreeable to that sagacity you so eminently possess; but I think I have found a method to obviate that inconvenience. A channel may be cut from the lake to the river, and a narrow slip of land left between them. By these means the water in the lake will not only be preserved and kept distinct from the river, but the same purposes will be answered as if they were united; for, it will be very easy to convey over that little intervening ridge, whatever goods shall be brought down by the canal. This is a scheme which may be pursued, if it should be found necessary; but I hope there will be no occasion to have recourse to it. For, in the first place, the lake itself is considerably deep; and in the next, by damming up a river which runs from it on the opposite side, and turning its course as we shall find expedient, the same quantity of water may still be retained. Besides, there are several little brooks near the place where it is proposed the channel shall be cut, which, if skilfully collected, will supply the lake vater, in proportion to what it shall discharge. you should rather approve of the channel's extended farther, and cut narrower, and so

* See Letters 50. and 51. of this Book.

conveyed directly into the sea, without running into the river; the reflux of the tide will return whatever it receives from the lake. After all, if the nature of the place should not admit of any of these schemes, the course of the water may be checked by sluices. These, however, and many other particulars, will be more skilfully examined into by the engineer, whom, agreeably to your promise, I hope you will send; for indeed, sir, it is an enterprize well worthy of your attention and magnificence. In the mean while, I have written to the illustrious Calpurnius Macer, in pursuance of your orders, to send me a skilful engineer, proper for this occasion.

LETTER LXX.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

IT is evident, my dear Pliny, that neither your prudence nor your care have been wanting in this affair of the lake; since, in order to render it of more general benefit, you have provided so many expedients against the hazard of its being drained. I leave it to your own choice to pursue whichever of the schemes shall be thought most proper. Calpurnius Macer will furnish you, no doubt, with an engineer, as artists of that kind are not wanting in his province.

LETTER LXXI.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

A very considerable question, sir, in which this whole province is interested, has been lately started, concerning the state and maintenance of deserted children.* I have examined the constitutions of former princes on this head, but not finding any thing in them relating either in general or particular to the Bithynians, I thought it necessary to apply to you for your directions; for, in a point which seems to require the special interposition of your authority, I could not content myself with following precedents. An edict of the emperor Augustus (as pretended) was read to me concerning one Annia; as also a letter from Vespasian to the Lacedemonians, and another from Titus to the same, with one likewise from him to the Achæans. At the same time, some letters from Domitian were exhibited to me, directed to the Proconsul Avidius Nigrinus, and Armenius Brocchus, together with one from that prince to the Lacedemonians; but I have not transmitted them to you, as well because they were not correct, (and some of them, too, of suspicious authority,) as because I imagine the true copies are preserved in your archives.

* That is, whether they should be considered in a state of freedom, or slavery.

LETTER LXXII.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

THE question concerning such children who were exposed by their parents, and afterwards preserved by others, and educated in a state of servitude, though born free, has been frequently discussed; but I do not find in the constitutions of the princes, my predecessors, any general regulation upon this head, extending to all the provinces. There are, indeed, some rescripts of Domitian to Avidius Nigrinus and Armenius Brocchus, which ought to be observed; but Bithynia is not comprehended in the provinces therein mentioned. I am of opinion, therefore, that the claims of those, who assert their right of freedom upon this principle, should be allowed, without compelling them to purchase their liberty by repaying the money advanced for their maintenance.

LETTER LXXIII.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

HAVING been petitioned by certain persons to grant them the liberty (agreeably to the practice of former proconsuls) to remove the relics of their deceased relations, suggesting that either their monuments were decayed by age, or ruined by the inundations of the river, or for other reasons of the same kind; I thought proper, sir, knowing that, in

house, which you say is fallen into ruins, for the situation of their bath. But it is not sufficiently clear by your letter, whether the temple in the centre of the piazza was actually dedicated to Claudius or not; for if it were, it is still consecrated ground.*

LETTER LXXVII.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

I HAVE been pressed by some persons to take upon myself the cognizance of causes relating to claims of freedom by birth-right, agreeably to a rescript of Domitian's to Minucius Rufus, and to the practice of former proconsuls. But upon casting my eye on the decree of the senate concerning cases of this nature, I find it only mentions the proconsular provinces.† I have therefore, sir, deferred interfering in this affair, till I shall receive your commands how you would have me act.

* And consequently, by the Roman laws, inapplicable to any other purpose.

† The Roman provinces, in the times of the emperors, were of two sorts, and distinguished by the name of the *Provinciæ Cæsaris*, and the *Provinciæ Senatus*. The *Provinciæ Cæsaris*, or imperial provinces, were such as the emperor, for reasons of policy, reserved to his own immediate administration, or of those whom he thought proper to appoint: the *Provinciæ Senatus*, or proconsular provinces, were such as he left to the government of proconsuls, or prætors, chosen in the ordinary method of election. Vide SUET. *in Aug.* c. 44. n. 1. Of the former kind was Bithynia, at the time when our author presided in that province. Vide MASSON. *Vit. Plin.* p. 133.

LETTER LXXVIII.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

IF you will send me the decree of the senate, which occasioned your doubt, I shall be able to judge, whether it is proper you should take cognizance of causes relating to claims of freedom by birth-right.

LETTER LXXIX.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

JULIUS LARGUS, of the province of Pontica,* (a person whom I never saw, nor indeed ever heard his name till lately,) in confidence, sir, of your distinguishing judgment in my favour, has intrusted me with the execution of the last instance of his loyalty towards you. He has left me, by his will, his estate upon trust, in the first place to receive out of it, 50,000 sesterces,† for my own use, and to apply the remainder for the benefit of the cities of Heraclea and Tios,‡ either by erecting some public edifice dedicated to your honour, or instituting Athletic games, as I shall judge proper. These games are to be celebrated every five years, and to be called *Trajan's games*. My principal reason for

* A province in Asia, bordering upon the Black Sea, and, by some ancient geographers, considered as one province with Bithynia.

† About L.400 sterling.

‡ Cities of Pontus, near the Euxine or Black Sea.

acquainting you with this bequest is, that I may receive your directions, which of the respective alternatives to choose.

LETTER LXXX.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

BY the prudent choice Julius Largus has made of a trustee, one would imagine he had known you perfectly well. You will consider, then, which of the alternatives will most tend to perpetuate the testator's memory, under the circumstances of the respective cities; and make your option accordingly.

LETTER LXXXI.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJ.

YOU acted agreeably, sir, to your usual consummate prudence, when you ordered the illustrious Calpurnius Macer to send a legionary centurion to Byzantium:* you will consider, whether the city of Juliopolis does not also deserve the same attention; which, though it is extremely small, sustains very great burthens, and is so much the more exposed to oppressions, as it is less capable of resisting them. Whatever benefits you shall confer upon that city, will in effect be advantageous to the whole country; for it is situated at the entrance of Bithynia, and is the town through which all who travel into this province generally pass.

* Constantinople.

LETTER LXXXII.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

THE circumstances of the city of Byzantium are such, by the great confluence of strangers to it, that I thought it incumbent upon me to honour it with a legionary centurion's guard, which was always granted to them in former reigns. But, if we should distinguish the city of Juliopolis in the same manner, it will be introducing a precedent for many other towns, whose claim to that favour will rise in proportion to their want of strength. I have so much confidence, however, in your administration, as to believe you will omit no method of protecting them from injuries. If any persons shall act contrary to the discipline I have enjoined, let them be instantly corrected; or if they happen to be soldiers, and their crimes should be too enormous for immediate chastisement, I would have them sent to their officers, with an account of the particular misdemeanour you shall find they have committed: but, if the delinquents should be on their way to Rome, inform me by letter.

LETTER LXXXIII.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

BY a law of Pompey's,* concerning the Bithynians, it is enacted, sir, that no person shall be a

* Pompey the Great having subdued Mithridates, and by that means greatly enlarged the Roman empire, passed several laws relating to the newly-conquered provinces, and, among others, that which is here mentioned; as Catanæus observes from Appian.

magistrate, or be chosen into the senate, under the age of thirty. By the same law it is declared, that those, who have exercised the office of magistrate, are qualified to be members of the senate. Subsequent to this law, the Emperor Augustus published an edict, by which it was ordained, that persons of the age of twenty-two should be capable of being magistrates. The question, therefore, is, whether those, who have exercised the functions of a magistrate before the age of thirty, may be legally chosen into the senate by the censors?* And if so, whether, by the same kind of construction, they may be elected senators, at the age which entitles them to be magistrates, though they should not actually have borne any office? For this custom, it seems, has hitherto been observed, and is said to be expedient; as it is rather more advantageous, that persons of noble birth should be admitted into the senate, than those of plebeian rank. The censors elect having desired my sentiments upon this point, I was of opinion, that, both by the law of Pompey, and the edict of Augustus, they who had exercised the magistracy before the age of thirty, might be chosen into the senate; and for this reason, because the edict allows the office of magistrate to be undertaken before thirty, and the law declares, that whoever has been a magistrate, should be eligible into the senate. But with respect to those who never discharged any office in the state, though

* The right of electing senators did not originally belong to the censors, who were only, as Tully somewhere calls them, *Guardians of the discipline and manners of the city*; but, in process of time, they engrossed the whole privilege of conferring that honour.

they were of the age required for that purpose, I had some doubt; and therefore, sir, I apply to you for your directions. I have subjoined to this letter the heads of the law, together with the edict of Augustus.

LETTER LXXXIV.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

I AGREE with you, my dear Pliny, in your construction; and am of opinion, that the law of Pompey is so far repealed by the edict of the Emperor Augustus, that those persons, who are not under twenty-two years of age, may execute the office of magistrates, and be received into the senate of their respective cities. But I think that they, who are under thirty years of age, and have not discharged the function of a magistrate, cannot, upon pretence that in point of years they were competent to the office, legally be elected into the senate of their several communities.

LETTER LXXXV.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

WHILST I was dispatching, at my apartments in Prusa,* some affairs, sir, relating to the public, with an intention of leaving that city the same day, Asclepiades, a magistrate, informed me, that Eumolpus had appealed to me from a motion

* At the foot of Mount Olympus.

which Cocceiānus Dion made in their senate. Dion, it seems, having been appointed supervisor of a public edifice, desired that it might be assigned* to the city in form. Eumolpus, who attended as counsel for Flavius Archippus, insisted, that Dion should first be required to deliver in his accounts relating to this work, before it should be assigned to the corporation; suggesting, that he had not performed his office in a requisite manner. He added, at the same time, that in this building, in which your statue is erected, the bodies of Dion's wife and son are entombed:† and urged me to hear this cause in the public court of judicature. Upon my assenting to his request, and deferring my journey for that purpose, he desired a longer day in order to prepare matters for the hearing, and that I would try this cause in some other city. I appointed the city of Nicea; and accordingly having taken my seat on the tribunal, Eumolpus, pretending not to be yet sufficiently prepared, moved, that the trial might be again put off: Dion, on the contrary, insisted it should be now heard.

* This, probably, was some act, whereby the city was to ratify and confirm the proceedings of Dion under the commission assigned to him.

† It was a notion which generally prevailed with the ancients, in the Jewish as well as Heathen world, that there was a pollution in the contact of dead bodies, and this they extended to the very house in which the corpse lay, and even to the uncovered vessels that stood in the same room. (Vide Pot. *Antiq.* v. 2. 188.) From some such opinion as this it is probable, that the circumstance here mentioned of placing Trajan's statue where these bodies were deposited, was esteemed as a mark of disrespect to his person.

They debated this point very fully on both sides, and entered a little into the merits of the cause; when being of opinion, that it was reasonable it should be adjourned, and thinking it proper to advise with you in an affair which was of consequence in point of example, I directed them to exhibit the articles of their respective allegations in writing; for I was desirous you should judge from their own express representations, of the state of the question between them. Dion promised to comply with this direction; as Eumolpus also assured me he would draw up a memorial of what he had to alledge on the part of the community. But he added, that, being only concerned as advocate on behalf of Archippus, whose instructions he had already laid before me, he had nothing to charge with respect to the sepulchres. Archippus, however, for whom Eumolpus was counsel here, as at Prusa, assured me he would himself present a charge in form with respect to this last article. But neither Eumolpus nor Archippus (though I have waited several days for that purpose) have yet performed their engagement: Dion indeed has; and I have annexed his memorial to this letter. I have inspected the buildings in question, where I find your statue is placed in a library; and as to the edifice in which the bodies of Dion's wife and son are said to be deposited, it stands in the middle of an area surrounded with a colonade. Deign, therefore, I entreat you, sir, to direct my judgment in the determination of this cause above all others, as it is a point to which the public is greatly attentive. And, indeed, it highly deserves a very mature deliberation, since the fact

is not only acknowledged, but countenanced by many precedents.

LETTER LXXXVI.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

YOU well know, my dear Pliny, that it is my fixed maxim not to render myself an object of terror, either by severe and rigorous measures of government, or by encouraging accusations of treason against the respect due to my person; you had no reason, therefore, to hesitate a moment upon the point, concerning which you thought proper to consult me. Without entering into the merits of the question, (to which I would by no means give any attention, though there were ever so many instances of the same kind,) I recommend to your care the examining of Dion's accounts relating to the public works which he has finished; as it is a case in which the interest of the city is concerned, as Dion neither ought, nor, it seems, does refuse, to submit to the examination.

LETTER LXXXVII.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

THE Niceans having, in the name of their community, conjured me, sir, by all my hopes and wishes for your prosperity and immortal glory, (an adjuration which is and ought to be most sacred to me,) to present to you their petition; I did not

think myself at liberty to refuse them: I have therefore annexed it to this letter.

LETTER LXXXVIII.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

THE Niceans, I find, claim a right, by an edict of Augustus, to the estate of every citizen who dies intestate. You will therefore summon the several parties interested in this question, and with the assistance of Epimachus and Gemellinus, my procurators, (having duly weighed every argument that shall be alledged against the claim,) determine as shall appear most equitable.

LETTER LXXXIX.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

MAY this and many succeeding birth-days be attended, sir, with the highest felicity to you; and may you, in the midst of an uninterrupted course of health and prosperity, be still adding to the increase of that immortal glory, which your virtues justly merit!

LETTER XC.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

YOUR wishes, my dear Pliny, for my enjoyment of many happy birth-days, amidst the glory

and prosperity of the republic, were extremely agreeable to me.

LETTER XCI.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

THE city of Sinope* is ill supplied, sir, with water, which, however, may be brought thither from about sixteen miles distance, in great plenty and perfection. The ground, indeed, near the source of the spring, is, for somewhat more than a mile, of a very suspicious and loose nature; but I have directed an examination to be made, (which will be effected at a small expence,) whether it is sufficiently firm to support any superstructure. I have taken care to provide a suitable fund for this purpose, if you should approve, sir, of a work so conducive to the health and pleasure of this colony, greatly distressed by a scarcity of water.

LETTER XCII.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

I WOULD have you proceed, my dear Pliny, in carefully examining, whether the ground you suspect, is firm enough to support an aqueduct. For, I have no manner of doubt that it is proper the city of Sinope should be supplied with water; provided their finances will bear the expence of a work so conducive to their health and pleasure.

* In the province of Pontica.

LETTER XCIII.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

THE free and confederate city of Amisus* enjoys, by your indulgence, the privilege of being governed by its own laws. A memorial having been there presented to me concerning a charitable institution,† I have subjoined it to this letter, that you may consider, sir, whether, and how far, this society ought to be licensed or prohibited.

LETTER XCIV.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

IF the prayer of the petition of the Amiseni which you have transmitted to me, concerning the establishment of a charitable society, be agreeable to their own laws, which by the articles of alliance it is stipulated they shall enjoy, I shall not oppose it; especially if these contributions are employed, not for the purposes of riot and faction, but for the support of the indigent. In other cities, however,

* A colony of Athenians in the province of Ponticas.

† The learned Cassaubon, in his observations upon Theophrastus, (as cited by one of the commentators,) informs us, that there were at Athens, and other cities of Greece, certain fraternities, which paid into a common chest a monthly contribution towards the support of such of their members who had fallen into misfortunes; upon condition, that if ever they arrived to more prosperous circumstances, they should repay into the general fund the money so advanced.

which are subject to our laws, I would have all assemblies of this nature prohibited.

LETTER XCV.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

SUETONIUS TRANQUILLUS, sir, is a person of great probity and learning, as well as of noble birth. I was so much pleased with his disposition and manners, that I have long since invited him into my family, as my constant guest and domestic friend; and my affection for him increased the more I discovered of his character. Two reasons concur to render the privilege* which the law

* By the law for encouragement of matrimony, (some account of which has already been given in the notes above,) those who lived bachelors, were declared incapable of inheriting any legacy by will; so likewise if, being married, they had no children, they could not claim the full advantage of benefactions of that kind: (*Lipsii Excurs. in Tac. An.* 3. c. 24.) Thus Nævolus, in Juvenal, very humorously urges his gallantries in his friend's family, as a meritorious piece of service which he had done him:

> *Nullum ergo meritum est, ingrate ac perfide, nullum,*
> *Quod tibi filiolus, vel filia nascitur ex me?—*
> *Jura parentis habes; propter* me *scriberis heres;*
> *Legatum* omne *capis, necnon et dulce caducum.*
> Sat. 9. v. 82, &c.

> And owest thou nothing then, ingrate! to me,
> That from my loins you sons and daughters see?
> A parent's privilege by *me* you gain,
> And the rich legacy in *full* obtain.

Pliny therefore alludes to this law, when he mentions the bounties of Tranquillus's deceased friends, as one reason why it was expedient for him to obtain the *jus trium liberorum*, viz. in order to entitle him to the full benefit of their several bequests.

grants to those who have three children, particularly necessary to him; I mean the bounty of his friends, and the ill success of his marriage. Those advantages, therefore, which nature has denied to him, he hopes to obtain from your goodness, by my intercession. I am thoroughly sensible, sir, of the value of the privilege I am asking; but I know, too, I am asking it from one, whose gracious compliance with all my desires I have amply experienced. How passionately I wish to do so in the present instance, you will judge by my thus requesting it in my absence; which I would not, had it not been a favour which I am more than commonly anxious to obtain.

LETTER XCVI.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

YOU cannot but be perfectly sensible, my dear Pliny, how reserved I am in granting favours of the kind you desire; having frequently declared in the senate, that I had not exceeded the number which I assured that illustrious order I would be contented with. I have yielded, however, to your request; and have directed it to be inserted in my register, that I have conferred upon Tranquillus, on my usual conditions, the privilege which the law grants to those who have three children.

LETTER XCVII.*

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

IT is a rule, sir, which I inviolably observe, to refer myself to you in all my doubts; for, who is more capable of removing my scruples, or informing my ignorance? Having never been present at any trials concerning those persons who are Christians, I am unacquainted, not only with the nature of their crimes, or the measure of their punishment, but how far it is proper to enter into an examination concerning them. Whether, therefore, any difference is usually made with respect to the ages of the guilty, or no distinction is to be observed between the young and the adult; whether repentance entitles them to a pardon; or, if a man has been once a Christian, it avails nothing to desist from his error; whether the very profession of Christianity, unattended with any criminal act, or only the crimes themselves inherent in the profession, are punishable: in all these points I am greatly doubtful. In the mean while, the method I have observed towards those who have been brought before me as Christians, is this: I interrogated them whether they were Christians; if they confessed, I

* This letter is esteemed as almost the only genuine monument of ecclesiastical antiquity relating to the times immediately succeeding the apostles, it being written not above forty years at most after the death of St. Paul. It was preserved by the Christians themselves, as a clear and unsuspicious evidence of the purity of their doctrines; and is frequently appealed to be the early writers of the church against the calumnies of their adversaries.

repeated the question twice, adding threats at the same time; and if they still persevered, I ordered them to be immediately punished. For, I was persuaded, whatever the nature of their opinions might be, a contumacious and inflexible obstinacy certainly deserved correction. There were others also brought before me possessed with the same infatuation; but being citizens of Rome,* I directed that they should be conveyed thither. But this crime spreading (as is usually the case) while it was actually under prosecution, several instances of the same nature occurred. An information was presented to me without any name subscribed, containing a charge against several persons: these, upon examination, denied they were, or ever had been, Christians. They repeated after me an invocation to the gods, and offered religious rites with wine and frankincense before your statue, (which for that purpose I had ordered to be brought, together with those of the gods,) and even reviled the name of Christ; whereas there is no forcing, it is said, those who are really Christians, into any of these compliances. I thought it proper, therefore, to discharge them. Some among those who were accused by a witness in person, at first confessed themselves Christians, but immediately after denied it; the rest owned, indeed, they had been of that number formerly, but had now (some above three, others more, and a few

* It was one of the privileges of a Roman citizen, secured by the Sempronian law, that he could not be capitally convicted but by the suffrage of the people; which seems to have been still so far in force, as to make it necessary to send the persons here mentioned to Rome.

above twenty years ago) renounced that error. They all worshipped your statue, and the images of the gods, uttering imprecations at the same time against the name of Christ. They affirmed the whole of their guilt, or their error, was, that they met on a certain stated day before it was light, and addressed themselves in a form of prayer to Christ, as to some god, binding themselves by a solemn oath, not for the purposes of any wicked design, but never to commit any fraud, theft, or adultery; never to falsify their word, nor deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up; after which, it was their custom to separate, and then reassemble, to eat in common a harmless meal. From this custom, however, they desisted after the publication of my edict, by which, according to your commands, I forbade the meeting of any assemblies. In consequence of this their declaration, I judged it the more necessary to endeavour to extort the real truth, by putting two female slaves to the torture, who were said to officiate* in their religious functions; but all I could discover was, that these people were actuated by an absurd and excessive superstition. I deemed it expedient, therefore, to adjourn all farther proceedings, in order to consult you. For, it appears to be a matter highly deserving your consideration; more especially as great

* These women, it is supposed, exercised the same office as Phœbe, mentioned by St. Paul, whom he styles deaconess of the church of Cenchrea. Their business was to tend the poor and sick, and other charitable offices; as also to assist at the ceremony of female baptism, for the more decent performance of that rite; as Vossius observes upon this passage.

numbers must be involved in the danger of these prosecutions, which have already extended, and are still likely to extend, to persons of all ranks and ages, and even of both sexes. In fact, this contagious superstition is not confined to the cities only, but has spread its infection among the neighbouring villages and country. Nevertheless, it still seems possible to restrain its progress. The temples, at least, which were once almost deserted, begin now to be frequented; and the sacred solemnities, after a long intermission, are revived; to which I must add, there is again also a general demand for the victims, which for some time past had met with but few purchasers. From the circumstances I have mentioned, it is easy to conjecture what numbers might be reclaimed, if a general pardon were granted to those who shall repent of their error.

LETTER XCVIII.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

THE method you have pursued, my dear Pliny, in the proceedings against those Christians which were brought before you, is extremely proper; as it is not possible to lay down any fixed rule by which to act in all cases of this nature. But I would not have you *officiously* enter into any enquiries concerning them. If indeed they should be brought before you, and the crime should be proved, they must be punished;* with this restriction,

* If we impartially examine the present instance of the persecution of the Christians, we shall find it to have been grounded on

however, that where the party denies he is a Christian, and shall make it evident that he is not, by in-

the ancient constitution of the state, and not to have proceeded from an arbitrary or intolerant spirit in Trajan. The Roman legislature appears to have been early jealous of any innovation in point of public worship; and we find the magistrates, during the old republic, frequently interposing in cases of that nature. Valerius Maximus has collected some instances to that purpose, (L. 1. c. 3.) and Livy mentions it as an established principle of the earlier ages of the commonwealth, to guard against the introduction of foreign ceremonies of religion. *Quoties* (says that excellent historian, speaking in the person of one of the consuls who is addressing himself to the people) *quoties hoc patrum avorumque ætate negotium est magistratibus datum, ut sacra externa fieri vetarent? Judicabant enim prudentissimi viri—nihil æque dissolvendæ religionis esse, quam ubi non patrio, sed externo ritu sacrificaretur.*—L. 39. c. 16. It was an old and invariable maxim likewise of the Roman government, not to suffer any unlicensed assemblies of the people; as the reader must have observed by several of the preceding letters in this book; and to that fact Livy also bears witness: *Majores vestri* (says the historian) *ne vos quidem nisi quum*, &c. *forte temere coire noluerunt; et ubicunque multitudo esset, ibi et legitimum rectorum multitudinis censebant debere esse.*—L. 36. c. 25.

The circumstance that attended the Christian assemblies being held at an unusual hour, (*ante lucem*,) seems to have raised a surmise, that they were of the Bacchanalian kind. For it is extremely observable, that in the account which the Christians here give of the true design of their meeting, they justify themselves from the very crimes with which the Bacchanalians had been charged; intimating, it should seem, that they themselves had been taxed with the same: *Se sacramento non ad scelus aliquod obstringere; sed ne furta, ne latrocinia, ne adulteria committerent, ne fidem fallerent*, &c. which runs exactly parallel with the accusation against the Bacchanalians, as it stands in Livy: *Nec unum genus noxæ, stupra promiscua*, &c. *sed falsi testes, falsa signa testimoniaque et indicia ex eadem officina exibant.*—Liv. l. 39. c. 8.

Upon the whole, then, it appears evident, that these primitive Christians, deeply impressed with the evidence of the holy religion they professed, nobly dared, at all hazard, to render themselves

voking our gods; let him (notwithstanding any former suspicion) be pardoned upon his repentance. Informations without the accuser's name subscribed, ought not to be received in prosecutions of any sort; as it is introducing a very dangerous precedent, and by no means agreeable to the equity of my government.

LETTER XCIX.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

THE elegant and beautiful city of Amastris,* sir, has, among other capital buildings, a most noble and extensive piazza. On one entire side of this structure runs what is called, indeed, a river, but, in effect, is no other than a vile common sewer, extremely offensive to the eye, and, at the same time, very unwholesome by its noxious vapours. It will be advantageous, therefore, in point of health, as well as ornament, to have it covered; which shall be done, with your permission; as I will take care, on my part, that money be not wanting for executing so noble and necessary a work.

obnoxious, not particularly indeed to Trajan, but to the *ancient* and *intolerant* laws of the state; by refusing to join in communion with the *established* worship, by assembling themselves without *legal* authority, and by holding their meetings at a suspicious hour of the night.

* Situated on the Black Sea, in the province of Pontus.

LETTER C.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

IT is highly reasonable, my dear Pliny, if the water which runs through the city of Amastris is prejudicial to the health of the inhabitants, that it should be covered. I am well assured you will, with your usual attention, take care that the money, necessary for this work, shall not be wanting.

LETTER CI.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

WE have celebrated, sir, with great joy and festivity, those votive solemnities which were publicly proclaimed as formerly, and renewed them the present year, accompanied by the soldiers and provincials, who zealously joined with us in imploring the gods, that they would be graciously pleased to preserve you and the republic in that state of prosperity, which your many and great virtues, particularly your piety towards them, so justly merit.

LETTER CII.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

IT was very agreeable to me to learn, by your letter, that the army and the provincials joyful-

ly seconded you with great unanimity, in those vows which you paid and renewed to the immortal gods, for my preservation and prosperity.

LETTER CII.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

WE have celebrated, with all the warmth of that pious zeal we justly ought, the day in which, by a very happy succession, the protection of the empire was delivered into your hands; recommending to the gods, by whose gracious favour you received the sovereignty, the object of our public vows and congratulations.

LETTER CIV.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

I WAS extremely well pleased to be informed by your letter, that you had, at the head of the soldiers and the provincials, solemnized my accession to the empire, with all due joy and zeal.

LETTER CV.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

VALERIUS PAULINUS, sir, having bequeathed to me the right of patronage* over all his

* By the Papian law, which passed in the consulship of M. Papius Mutilus and Q. Poppeus Secundus, U. C. 761. if a freedman

freedmen except one, I entreat you to grant the freedom of Rome to three of them. To desire you to extend this favour to all of them, would, I fear, be too unreasonable a trespass upon your indulgence; which, having amply experienced, I ought to be so much the more cautious in troubling. The persons for whom I make this request are, C. Valerius Æstiæus, C. Valerius Dionysius, and C. Valerius Aper.

LETTER CVI.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

YOU act in a most worthy manner, by consulting the interest of those persons whom Valerius Paulinus has confided to your trust; I cannot, therefore, but encourage you, as far as depends upon me, to lose no time for that purpose. I have accordingly granted the freedom of the city to such of his freedmen, for whom you requested it, and have directed the patent to be registered: I am ready to confer the same on the rest, whenever you shall desire me.

LETTER CVII.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

P. ACCIUS AQUILA, captain of the sixth equestrian cohort, requested me, sir, to transmit his

died worth a hundred thousand sesterces, (or about 800l. of our money,) leaving only one child, his patron (that is, the master from whom he received his liberty) was entitled to half his estate; if he left two children, to one third; but if more than two, the patron was absolutely excluded. This was afterwards altered by Justinian, *Inst.* l. 3. tit. 8.

petition to you, in favour of his daughter. I thought it would be unkind to refuse him this good office, knowing, as I do, with what patience and humanity you attend to the petitions of the soldiers.

LETTER CVIII.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

I HAVE read the petition of P. Accius Aquila, captain of the sixth equestrian cohort, which you sent to me; and, in compliance with this request, I have conferred upon his daughter the freedom of the city of Rome. I send you, at the same time, the patent, which you will deliver to him.

LETTER CIX.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

I REQUEST, sir, your directions with respect to the recovering of those debts which are due to the cities of Bithynia and Pontus, either for rent, or goods sold, or for any other consideration. I find they have a privilege conceded to them by several proconsuls, of being preferred to other creditors; and this custom has prevailed, as if it had been established by law. Your prudence, I imagine, will think it necessary to enact some settled rule, by which their rights may always be secured. For the edicts of others, how wisely soever founded, are but feeble and temporary ordinances, unless confirmed and sanctioned by your authority.

LETTER CX.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

THE right which the cities either of Pontus or Bithynia claim relating to the recovery of debts of whatever kind, due to their several communities, must be determined agreeably to their respective laws. Where any of those communities enjoy the privilege of being preferred to other creditors, it must be maintained; but where no such privilege prevails, it would not be just that I should establish one, in prejudice of private property.

LETTER CXI.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

THE solicitor to the treasury of the city of Amisis instituted a claim, sir, before me, against Julius Piso, of about 40,000 denarii,* which were presented to him by the public above twenty years ago, with the consent of the general council and assembly of the city; and he founded his demand upon certain of your edicts, by which donations of this kind are prohibited. Piso, on the other hand, asserted, that he had conferred large sums of money upon the community, and, indeed, had expended, in liberalities to them, almost the whole of his estate. He insisted upon the length of time

* About L. 1166 sterling.

which had intervened since this donation, and hoped that he should not be compelled, to the ruin of the remainder of his fortunes,* to refund a present, which had been conferred upon him long since, in return for many good offices he had done to the city. For this reason, sir, I thought it necessary to suspend giving any judgment in this cause, till I shall receive your directions.

LETTER CXII.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

THOUGH by my edicts I have ordained, that no largesses shall be given out of the public money; yet, that numberless private persons may not be disturbed in the secure possession of their fortunes, those donations which have been made long since,

* The translator has ventured to give this sense to *reliquæ dignitatis*. It is, he confesses, a very uncommon, perhaps the single, instance of the word *dignitas* being used in that meaning; still, however, the context, together with the epithet which is joined with it, will, he trusts, clearly justify him. There is nothing in the nature of this case to make it reasonable to suppose, that the dignity of Julius Piso should be impeached; as little is it to be collected from any thing contained in this letter, or Trajan's answer. The adjective *reliqua* being added to *dignitas*, removes every suspicion of its signifying *honour*, (as the ingenious French Translator, Mons. de Sacy, and his humble copier, the Italian Tedeschi, have rendered it,) for honour scarce admits of fractions, and there can be no remainder after a subtraction of that kind. The truth, it should seem, is, that, as the value of a man's estate was, among the Romans, a necessary qualification to render him capable of the dignities of the commonwealth, our author, by a figure of speech, puts *dignitas* for *facultas*; the consequent (to speak in the language of the grammarians) for the antecedent.

ought not to be called in question or revoked. We will not, therefore, enquire into any thing that has been transacted in this affair so long ago as twenty years; for I would be no less attentive to secure the repose of every private man, than to preserve the treasure of every public community.

LETTER CXIII.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

THE Pompeian law, sir, which is observed in Pontus and Bithynia, does not direct that any money shall be paid into the public chest by those who are elected into the senate by the censors for their admission. It has, however, been usual for such members as have been admitted into those assemblies, in pursuance of the privilege which you were pleased to grant to some particular cities, of receiving above their legal number, to pay one* or two† thousand denarii on their election. Subsequent to your grant of this privilege, the Proconsul Anicius Maximus ordained, (though indeed his edict related to some few cities only,) that those who should be elected by the censors, should also pay into the treasury a certain sum, which varied in different places. It remains, therefore, for your consideration, whether it would not be proper to settle a certain fixed sum for each member who is elected into the council, to pay upon his admission; for it well becomes you, whose every word and ac-

* About L. 29. † And L. 58 sterling.

tion deserves to be immortalized, to establish laws that shall endure for ever.

LETTER CXIV.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

I CAN give no general directions applicable to all the cities of Bithynia, in relation to those who are elected members of their respective councils; whether they shall pay an honorary fee upon their admittance, or not. It seems best, therefore, in the present case, (and indeed is ever the safest way,) to leave each city to exercise its own peculiar laws. I think, however, the censors ought to set the sum lower to those who are chosen into the senate contrary to their inclinations, than to the rest.

LETTER CXV.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

THE Pomponian law, sir, allows the Bithynians to give the freedom of their respective cities to any person they think proper, provided he is not a foreigner, but native of some of the cities of this province. The same law specifies the particular causes for which the censors may expel a member the senate; amongst which, that of being a foreigner is not mentioned. Certain of the censors, therefore, have desired my opinion, whether they ought to expel a member, if he should happen to be a foreigner. But I thought it necessary to receive

your instructious in this case; not only because the law, though it forbids foreigners to be admitted citizens, does not direct that a senator shall be expelled for the same reason, but because I am informed, that there is in every city several members of their respective senates, who are not natives. If, therefore, this clause of the law, which seems to be obsolete by long custom to the contrary, should be enforced, many cities, as well as individuals, will be thrown into great confusion. I have annexed the heads of this law to my letter.

LETTER CXVI.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

YOU might well be doubtful, my dear Pliny, what reply to give to the censors, who consulted you concerning their right to elect into the senate foreign citizens, though of the same province. The authority of law on one side, and long custom prevailing against it on the other, might justly occasion you to hesitate. The proper measure in this case will be, to make no change in what is past, but to suffer those senators who are already elected, though contrary to law, to keep their seats, to whatever city they may belong; and in all future elections, to pursue the direction of the Pompeian law; for, to give it a retrospective operation would necessarily introduce great confusion.

LETTER CXVII.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

IT is customary in this city upon any person's either taking the manly robe,* solemnizing his marriage, entering upon the office of magistrate, or dedicating any public work, to invite the whole senate, together with a considerable part of the commonalty, to a feast, and distribute to each of the company one† or two denarii. I request you to inform me, whether you think proper this ceremony should continue to be observed, or how far you approve of it. For myself, though I am of opinion that upon certain occasions, especially those of public festivals, this kind of general invitations may be permitted; yet when they draw together a thousand persons, and sometimes more, it seems to be going beyond a reasonable number, and has somewhat the appearance of factious largesses.

LETTER CXVIII.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

IT is with reason you apprehend, that those public invitations, which extend to an immoderate number of people, and where the dole is distributed,

* See Vol. I. p. 223. note.

† About seven-pence of our money. The sum distributed upon these occasions, supposing the assembly to consist of a thousand persons, and two denarii given to each, would amount to about £. 58 sterling.

not singly to a few acquaintance, but as it were to whole collective fraternities, may be turned to the factious purposes of ambition. But I appointed you to your present government, fully relying upon your prudence, and in the persuasion that you would take proper measures for regulating the manners, and settling the peace of the province.

LETTER CXIX.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

THE Athletic victors, sir, in the Iselastic games,* conceive that the stipend you have established for the conquerors becomes due from the day they are crowned; for, it is not essential, they pretend, what time they were triumphantly conducted into their country, but *when* they merited that honour. On the contrary, when I consider the meaning of the term *Iselastic*, I am strongly inclined to think, that it is intended the stipend should commence from the time of their public entry. They likewise petition to be allowed the treat you give at those combats which you have converted into Iselastic, though their victories were gained before that change took place; for it is but reasonable, they assert, that

* These games are called *Iselastic*, from the Greek word ισελαυνω, *invehor*, because the victors, drawn by white horses, and wearing crowns on their heads, were conducted with great pomp into their respective cities, which they entered through a breach in the walls made for that purpose; intimating, as Plutarch observes, that a city, which produced such brave and victorious citizens, had little occasion for the defence of walls. (CATANEUS.) They received also annually a certain honourable stipend from the public.

they should receive the reward in this instance, as they are deprived of it at those games which have been divested of the honour of being Iselastic, since their victory. But I am very doubtful, whether a retrospect should be admitted in the case in question, and a reward given, to which the claimants had no right at the time they obtained the victory. I beg, therefore, you would be pleased to direct my judgment in these points, by explaining the intention of your own benefactions.

LETTER CXX.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

THE stipend appointed for the conqueror in the Iselastic games ought not, I think, to commence till he makes his triumphant entry into his city; nor are the prizes, at those combats which I have thought proper to make Iselastic, to be extended to those who were victors before that alteration took place. With regard to the plea which these athletic combatants urge, that they ought to receive the Iselastic prize at those combats which have been made Iselastic subsequent to their conquests, as they are denied it in the same case where the games have ceased to be so, it proves nothing in their favour; for, notwithstanding any new arrangement which has been made relating to these games, they are not required to return the recompence which they received prior to such alteration.

LETTER CXXI.

TO THE EMPEROR TRAJAN.

I HAVE hitherto never, sir, granted an order* for post-chaises to any person, or upon any occasion, but in affairs that relate to your administration. I find myself, however, at present under a sort of necessity to break through this fixed rule. My wife having received an account of her grandfather's† death, and being desirous to wait upon her aunt‡ with all possible expedition, I thought it would be unkind to deny her the use of this privilege; as the grace of so tender an office consists in the early discharge of it, and as I well knew a journey which was founded in filial piety, could not fail of your approbation. I should think myself highly ungrateful, therefore, were I not to acknowledge, that, among other singular obligations which I owe to your indulgence, I have this in particular, that, in confidence of your favour, I ventured to do without consulting you, what would have been too late had I waited for your consent.

LETTER CXXII.

TRAJAN TO PLINY.

YOU did me justice, my dear Pliny, by confiding in my affection towards you. Without doubt,

* See Letter 24 of this Book, and the note there.

† Fabatus. ‡ Hispulla.

if you had waited for my consent to forward your wife in her journey by means of those warrants which I have entrusted to your care, the use of them would not have answered your purpose; as it was proper this visit to her aunt should have the additional recommendation of being paid with all possible expedition.

AN

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